

Kv32Bs

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Dear Parents/Guardians

Geography field trip to Iceland Sunday 18th – Friday 23rd February 2018

In February 2018 we are looking to run our annual geography fieldtrip to Iceland again. This will take place over the beginning of the half term holiday in February, at a sufficient time away from public examinations, while still allowing for a suitable amount of daylight hours to view the various sites. The itinerary has been chosen to allow students to gain a fantastic insight into topics covered by both the GCSE, AS and A2 specifications. Examples include glaciation (studied at AS), hydrology (GCSE), volcanoes (A2/GCSE) and plate tectonics (A2/GCSE). This will once again provide a fabulous opportunity to understand the landscape and tectonic background of this island.

The trip itinerary will include:

Sat 17.02.18 Depart at 23:00. Travel by coach to Luton Airport

Sun 18.02.18 06:00 fly to Iceland. On arrival we will stop off at the famous Blue Lagoon. After 1-2 hrs bathing in the remarkable geothermally heated pools the group will be taken to the accommodation in Reykjavik. We will then go to the Cabin Hotel. This is located within walking distance (20 mins.) of the Reykjavik town centre. Dinner in the hotel followed by an evening walk into town for coffee.

Mon 19.02.18 This full day 'Golden Circle' excursion will start with a visit to Thingvellir National Park, a remarkable geological, and the most historical, site in Iceland. The beautiful canyon running through the park is actually the meeting point of two of the earth's tectonic plates. From here we will drive to Kerid, which is a volcanic crater thought to be around 3000 years old. A lake can be seen in the bottom of this crater as we walk around the edge. Next stop is by the beautiful Gullfoss, the golden waterfall and impressive canyon where tectonic actions and erosion by water join forces to create a stunning landscape. A few minutes' drive from here is the Great Geysir which has given its name to hot springs all over the world. You will see one of the most active geysers in the area - Strokkur - spouting up to 30 metres. En-route back to Reykjavik, if there is time and daylight, we might stop at Skalholt the home to the head of the church since 1056 AD and also to Hveragerdi, a horticultural and greenhouse town which started developing in 1902. Iceland has to import most crops and so greenhouses here are often vast and very modern. Evening dinner in the hotel and then free time. After dinner in the hotel, walk into the city centre to explore – by this time students will be free to do this walk in small groups.

Tue 20.02.18 Pack and leave Reykjavik over the Hellisheidi Mountain pass offering a magnificent view of the wide plains formed by glacial rivers. Continue past Hveragerdi with its brightly lit greenhouses before proceeding east through the small villages and farmlands to the majestic mountains towering over the coast. You will have a frequent view of mountains, including snow-shrouded Hekla, the country's most active volcano and the towering, ice capped strato volcano Eyjafjallajokull. You will stop at the spectacular waterfalls Seljalandsfoss and Skogafoss, both tumbling over high rock escarpments. There will be an opportunity to walk behind the waterfall.

The tour then takes you past Dyrholaey, a magnificent rocky headland with sheer cliffs, to the beautifully-located village of Vik, where you will stop for a hearty lunch (not included). After the break, head for the sea-shore made up of small black basalt pebbles with stacks and arches and wonderful basalt columns making up the cliffs behind. The beach is flanked by steep bird cliffs rising above the black, wave pounded sands. In the sea just outside of Vik are Reynisdrangar rocks – 66 metres above sea level at their highest. In the distance can be seen the islands of Heimaey. En-route back there may be the opportunity to visit Myrdalsjokull glacier, strictly subject to weather, light and road conditions before turning back to Reykjavik. Evening meal in hotel. Overnight in VIK.

- Wed 21.02.18 This is a new tour for us. Guided Skaftafell & Jokulsarlon Tour: Views of black sandy coast of Iceland's south shores, views of Eldhraun "woolley fringe" moss lava fields (from Lakagigar eruption), Skaftafell National Park, Jokulsarlon Glacier Lagoon. Evening meal in hotel. Overnight in VIK.
- Thu 22.02.18 Breakfast in hotel. Pack cases. Day excursion to the Reykjanes peninsula: Start by driving to Alftanes peninsula and to Bessastadir continuing on through the town of Hafnarfjordur and then towards the Blue Lagoon. From there the tour continues to the town of Grindavik and under low mountains along the cliff lined coast to look at this unique ecosystem. Next stop is at Krisuvik, an area with powerful jets of steam escaping from deep below the earth's crust. Drive towards Lake Kleifarvatn, set in fascinating, stark, moon-like surroundings and then back towards the Blafjoll skiing area, pass the mountains into the geothermal area of Hengill, where you will visit the high modern pure nature geothermal plant at Hellisheidi with its fantastic rock exhibit and chance to operate their seismograph in the modern interactive display. Dinner at hotel in Reykjavik. You have a swim at the local pool (10 minute walk) included in the cost of your tour in the evening.
- Fri 23.02.17 Early departure to the airport and flight back to the UK (Luton).
In case of late arrival and afternoon departure, day 1 and 6 will be swapped.

The cost of the 6 day trip is will be expected to be £1180 maximum, and maybe less. This currently includes:

- Coach travel from WKGS to Luton airport and return
- Return scheduled flights from Luton with Easyjet
- Full board accommodation. Students will share a double, twin or triple room equipped with wifi, satellite TV, en-suite bathroom, tea and coffee making facilities.
- Insurance will be the school's own school journey insurance, used on other international trips arranged by WKGS. This includes, amongst other things, the ability to fly a parent/guardian out to Iceland to collect their daughter/son/ward in the event of a medical emergency.
- Admission to extra museums on the tour.
- All travel and tours (6 in total) including an evening swim in a geothermally heated outdoor pool.

Final arrangements about departure times and flights are to be finalised but currently the itinerary appears to be coming in on budget.

This trip will be open to any student currently studying GCSE (Year 9, 10 and 11 in Sept 2017) and A level (Year 12 and 13 in Sept 2017) Geography and also GCSE Geology (past and present) in Year 12. Priority will usually be given to those in the sixth form. Initially this will be on a first come basis although as the trip is in half term holiday **we reserve the right as to the selection of participants** (usually based on a student's behaviour over the last year). Our previous trip showed us that there will be some considerable geographic knowledge and understanding derived from this trip – in particular a far greater appreciation of the topics listed (especially hydrology and coasts in Year 10; glaciation and tectonics in Year 12 (New specification) and tectonics in Years 11 and 13. This trip is not a compulsory part of the course merely an optional extra.

A risk assessment, together with further guidance literature and details of the insurance policy, will be available at the parents' meeting to be held in September 2017 (date to be advised) should there be sufficient interest shown. This would be the first of two such meetings if the trip does go ahead. Information is usually sent to parents/guardians via email allowing parents/guardians to raise concerns they have as they think of them.

If your daughter/son/ward is interested in going you should in the first instance return the reply slip to the Finance Office with the initial deposit of £200 to book the flights. This is only cashed if a place on the trip is gained. Should you drop out then we reserve the right to keep this deposit until a replacement is found or an agreement with the insurers to cover the cost has been reached. (Sixth formers in Year 12 who apply but then do not take up a place at WKGS in September will get their deposit refunded). The balance is usually then due 10 weeks before travel (late November 2017). EasyJet as a budget airline expect full payment straight away.

If you wish your daughter/son/ward to be considered for this trip then please **complete the attached slip and return this to the Finance Office with your initial deposit (£200). Cheques made payable to WKGS.** If successful, you will receive confirmation that we have sufficient interest to proceed with the trip

and an invitation to the first parents'/guardians' meeting. At this meeting you will be given a risk assessment together with a further form to sign regarding responsibilities of participants, a medical form and other permissions.

Temperatures at this time of year will probably average around -4° or colder with a frequent cold wind further decreasing the temperatures at times. Heavy snow is common. Advice will be given on the most suitable clothing to be worn. All participants will need to wear thermal underclothes and a good waterproof outer coat preferably insulated with a good liner. Hats, gloves etc. will also be needed. **Walking boots are compulsory for the trip.** Given these weather conditions and the nature of the terrain participants should therefore have a reasonable level of fitness. Any concerns can be discussed with any staff member of the geography department or with students (now in Years 12 and 13) who have been before.

Prices quoted are 'subject to availability and daily price fluctuations'. We will therefore hope to confirm this booking as soon as possible.

Please ensure you have responded as soon as possible if you are interested. Those in current Years 10 and 11 should reply by email to kvane@wkgs.net

Yours sincerely



Mr Kevin Vane
Head of Geography

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Please return to the Finance Office as soon as possible

Geography fieldtrip to Iceland 18th – 23rd February 2018

Student name..... **Form**.....

I would like my son/daughter/ward to participate in the above mentioned fieldtrip and enclose the initial deposit of £200 (cheques should be payable to West Kirby Grammar School with the student's name, form and "Iceland" on the reverse). I understand this is non-refundable unless the trip does not take place and the remaining balance will be due by November 2017.

The School has a blanket School Journey Insurance policy in place to provide appropriate cancellation, curtailment, medical and personal possessions cover. This policy also carries very limited personal accident insurance cover for pupils. As the school will not be liable for any injury arising from incidents beyond our direct control, parents may wish to consider purchasing their own personal accident cover to enhance the limited protection of this policy.

Signed..... **Date**.....