



The Blue Coat School

www.blue-coat.oldham.sch.uk

Proud to be part of the Cranmer Education Trust

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Ref: RHI/AAS/SHU

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Dear Parent/Guardian/Carer

In 2020, for the 12th year in succession we would have been taking all our Year 8's abroad, to stay for a week in Belgium, but sadly were unable to do so due to the pandemic. However, we will look to see what opportunities we can offer our pupils at a later date.

The Belgium trip is a wonderful opportunity for all our students to practise their language skills, demonstrate their geographical understanding and apply their historical knowledge of the First World War.

During the trip students get the opportunity to:

- Explore the local area, with a key focus on the Western Front during World War One.
- Visit Commonwealth war graves learning about the involvement of troops locally from Oldham and other countries. In particular, students will get to understand the importance of the Commonwealth contribution and how Indian and African troops held the front line before British troops even arrived. They will also visit real trenches and go through the tunnels to really empathise with what it must have been like for soldiers at the time.
- Visit the Ypres Salient in Belgium where major battles were fought. Students will also attend the Last Post Ceremony in Ypres, where pupils lay a wreath on behalf of the school and the community of Oldham, in memory of all those who lost their lives during WW1.
- Pupils will spend a day in Bruges in Belgium, where they will take part in a boat cruise and immerse themselves in the culture of the city, also visiting a local theme park.

It is an emotional experience which stimulates understanding, empathy, and much reflection. There are lots of activities and competitions at the chateau in the evenings and the pupils have a really good time continuing to develop relationships with the staff, friends and grow hugely in confidence and social skills.

We want very much to be able to run this kind of trip for your children as well. At this point, it is hard to see them beyond Year 6 with transition to secondary school before them, but they will grow very fast and they will be ready by Year 8 to go abroad and experience a very different culture and learning. Every year we see how much pupils look forward to this and how excited they are.

The parental contribution will be around £395.00 per pupil. To make payment easier, the contribution is spread over Years 7 and 8, with instalment payments usually commencing in October via WisePay. There are no expenses beyond this apart from a small amount of pocket-money - we deliberately go to places where there are very limited opportunities to shop. We realise that this is a significant expense for families, especially in the current economic climate and we will do our utmost to remove/reduce all other curriculum-related costs in Years 7 and 8 (e.g. for fieldwork), to reduce recurrent requests to parents.

I realise it is looking a long way ahead and that at present, you will be focused on transition and buying the uniform, but Year 8 comes around very fast!

Further details will be available later in the year and a letter of interest/registration for the trip will also be sent via WisePay in the Autumn term.

Please Note: Your child WILL need their OWN passport for this trip and ideally valid for 6 months left following the date of return.

Yours sincerely

Mr R Higgins, MA
Headteacher

