

Oaklands Catholic School and Sixth Form College

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19th September 2023

Dear Parent/Carer,

Geography Trip to Iceland 17th July – 21st July 2024

The Geography department have run many successful trips to Iceland since 2006; it is a remarkable place and is often described as the land of 'Fire and Ice'.

40 places will be on offer for the trip. If we don't get to 40, the next target is 32 to make the trip viable, but the cost would be £35pp higher. However, previous experience has shown that the trip is often over-subscribed. In previous years, we were able to take in excess of 40, and there may be a chance to expand the numbers this year. I will let parents know once I have the initial replies to see if this is the case. All students **in current Years 10 (25 places), 11 and 12 (15 places)** will be eligible to attend the trip. Places will be transferred to other year groups if they do not fill their allocation. If the trip is over-subscribed, places will be allocated by means of a draw - students studying GCSE or A level Geography will be given preference.

Itinerary (provisional, although the dates are fixed – all swimming optional):

- ❖ **Wednesday 17th July:** Leave Oaklands at 8am and fly to Keflavik (Iceland Air), arriving early afternoon. Our first stop will be the Gunnuhver Geothermal area and 'The Bridge between two Continents'. We will then visit the Blue Lagoon health spa for a couple of hours - [Welcome To Blue Lagoon Iceland Resort & Spa | Blue Lagoon Iceland](#) and have a pizza meal in Grindavik immediately after. At the time of writing, a volcano is currently erupting in that area! We will arrive at Hvolsvollur to stay at the Husid Guest House (we have stayed there many times before - [Guesthouse Húsið | \(guesthousehusid.is\)](#)).
- ❖ **Thursday 18th July:** Boat trip to Vestmannaeyjar islands (Heimaey) - scene of the 1973 eruption. Climb the Eldfell volcano and visit the 'Pompeii of the North'- buried houses under ash and lava. Take a coach tour around the island. Swim in the outdoor pool on Heimaey, which is a fantastic pool. Visit the Gluggafoss waterfall once back on the mainland.
- ❖ **Friday 19th July:** The 'Golden Circle' - Kerid volcanic crater, Faxafoss waterfall, watch the Strokkur geyser erupt at Geysir, Gulfoss waterfall, Thingvellir (where the plates are moving apart) and Ljofoss Hydro-electric power station.
- ❖ **Saturday 20th July:** Seljalandsfoss waterfall, Skogafoss waterfall, Solheimajokull glacier walk (crampons, ice axes and tour guides - a real highlight). Basalt columns at Reynisfjara, Vik and coastal scenery at Dyrholaey.
- ❖ **Sunday 21st July:** Visit the capital, Reykjavik. Visit the Hallgrímskirkja church, concert hall, City Hall and the main shopping areas. Leave Keflavik early afternoon and return home about 8pm.

If you would like to see the places where we go, I took drone footage on a trip from a previous year. The video is published on the school YouTube page - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EWibGo1c0q0>

If there is inclement weather, the itinerary could change. However, we have not had to do this on our previous trips. I try to pack in as much as we can in the time that we have there, so the days are extremely busy. Students will need to be reasonably fit and be able to cope with the physical exertion and the long days.

Accommodation is on a full board basis and we will stay at the Husid Guest House. We have stayed there on many occasions and it is ideal for a school group. Cereals and toast are provided in the morning, students make their own packed lunches after breakfast and a two-course hot meal is provided in the evening. All excursions will have been paid for in advance, but students will need to take some spending money (Icelandic Krona) if they want to purchase additional snacks, drinks or souvenirs. Students will also be advised to eat a meal at the airport on the day of departure, so will need money for this too.

If we get 40 students, the cost will be £1360 (although add £13 to this if 16 or over at the time of travel to cover the UK Air Passenger Duty tax). If we only get 32 students, the price will be £35 higher. Reply slips (not the deposit payment) should be handed in to the Finance Office by 4:00pm Monday 25th September. If the trip is over-subscribed by this date, places will be allocated by means of a draw. Parents will then be informed whether their child has been successful in gaining a place on the trip and a reserve list will be generated. Once informed by the school, **deposits of £200 (£213 if 16 or over at the time of travel due to the APD tax) are payable by Friday 29th September 2023 to secure the place on the trip.** All remaining payments (6) will be payable by:

- Second payment – 30th October 2023 - £200
- Third payment – 30th November 2023 - £200
- Fourth payment – 22nd January 2024 - £200
- Fifth payment – 29th February 2024 - £200
- Sixth payment – 28th March 2024 - £200
- Seventh and final payment – 15th April 2024 - £160 (or £195 if we only managed to get 32 students)

I am conscious that £1360 is high, but Iceland is an expensive country to visit I am afraid. I still believe this represents good value, given the amount of things we pack in to our trip.

As this trip is non-curricular, the school normally is unable to offer financial assistance and therefore the full cost of the activity must be borne by yourselves. Payments and accompanying paperwork must be handed in on or before the deadline date outlined above and late payments will jeopardise your child's place on the trip/activity. Should your child withdraw from the activity, please be aware that deposits are non-refundable. Any further payments can only be refunded if the place can be filled by another student on a waiting list, or if the withdrawal is for an insurable reason.

If there are any significant changes to the costs of the trip, these may have to be passed on to the student. Be assured that we will try to keep such costs to a minimum.

Please complete and return the consent form to the Finance Office. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me at m.bamford@oaklandscatholicschool.org.

Yours faithfully,



Mark Bamford – Assistant Headteacher/ Iceland trip leader

PLEASE RETURN TO THE FINANCE OFFICE BY 4:00PM 25th SEPTEMBER 2023

Geography Trip to Iceland 17 – 21 July 2024 – CONSENT FORM/REPLY SLIP

Student Name: Form:

I would like to submit an application for my child to participate in the visit to Iceland.

He/she is in good health and I consent to him/her taking part in the programme detailed in your letter. Should my child secure a place on this trip, I will ensure deposits and payments are made according to the payment schedule as outlined in the trip letter.

I will make future payments on line

My child studies GCSE or A level Geography

(N.B. students not studying Geography can go, but spaces will be given to Geographers first. Therefore, please still submit this slip even if your child does not study Geography)

Parent/Carer Name:

Signature:

Email address:

Contact Number: