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Year 9 Belonging Week 2026

Dear Parent/Carer

We are excited to provide you with details of the 'Power to the 9's' residential program that forms the key component of Belonging Week for Year 9 students.

Students in Year 9 continue to build on the work undertaken as a part of the Floreat program, which is designed to support them in developing a range of leadership skills and behaviours. Working with compassion to respond to challenge, students will strive to create inclusive and effective teams.

The week is divided into two parts: a three-day residential trip and two days of collaborative activities held on the school site and in the local area. However please note that we are introducing a new trip this year which follows a slightly different pattern in that the trip being the full 5 days away on residential (see below).

Residential Trips – ranging from 1 night to 4 nights

All students in Year 9 will have the opportunity to take part in a residential experience. We plan to take students on one of the following trips/activities: Torquay with Reach Outdoors, The Yorkshire Dales with How Stean Gorge, a Camping, Canoeing, Cooking & Climbing Challenge based in the local area, a Multi Activity trip to Copenhagen or a Canoe Expedition in Sweden.

Each activity has been thoughtfully chosen to provide a carefully curated program of activities tailored to offer the best experiences for our students with a wide range of options to allow for students to choose their own adventure. Each experience is dedicated to inspiring students to step beyond their comfort zones, work collaboratively, build vital teambuilding skills, and forge new friendships along the way. Students will be invited to consider the following:

Reach Outdoors: Monday – Wednesday (2 night residential)

Approximate cost: £330

Based in Devon, in a stunning coastal location, this trip is focused on water-based activities with a coastal theme. The itinerary is expected to include paddleboarding, raft building, kayaking, giant paddleboarding, coasteering, bushcraft, and archery. It's a perfect opportunity to explore the outdoors while enjoying a variety of exciting water and land-based experiences. Accommodation is in bell tents with access to a sole use dining and washing facility. Expect to be challenged, the need to work together is central to the whole trip!

Home | Reach Outdoors | Outdoor adventure specialists, Devon

How Stean Gorge: Monday – Wednesday (2 night residential)

Approximate cost: £365

Situated in the heart of the Dales, students are immersed in the beauty of rolling hills and rugged crags. The campsite overlooks a breathtaking limestone gorge with a cave system situated underneath the campsite! Activities are expected to include caving, gorge walking, via ferrata and local hiking. Accommodation is in purpose built wooden lodges. Each activity will ask a different question of the participants and require every member of the group to be brave and compassionate.

Outdoor Adventures in Yorkshire | How Stean Gorge

The 4 C's: Canoe, Climb, Cook & Camp: Monday – Wednesday (return home Monday night but camping overnight Tuesday)

Approximate cost: £185

This exciting multi activity trip minimises travel whilst offering an exciting range of activities in the local area. Activities include indoor climbing & an outdoor cooking challenge using an open fire with a 2 day canoe trip involving a stunning 1 night camp at a riverside camp site on the Thames. This adventure has it all, creativity, exciting activities and a chance to camp by the woods and water that inspired the 'Wind in the Willows'.

Copenhagen: Monday – Wednesday (2 night residential)

Approximate cost: £715

This trip offers students the chance to experience a one-of-a-kind program of activities in the stunning harbour surroundings of Copenhagen. Led by Laurence Halstead, an ex-Team GB fencer, the program features exciting activities such as 'kayak polo' on the harbour, a fencing workshop at a world-class fencing centre, and a bouldering session at Beta Boulders, one of Copenhagen's top climbing gyms. Students will stay in a youth hostel, with flights from Heathrow, transport via the Railair link from airport into the heart of Copenhagen, and all meals included in the budget. With Copenhagen being the world's best city for cycling, a guided cycle tour of the harbour will also be part of the adventure.

Sweden: Monday – Friday (4 night residential)

Approximate cost: £680

This trip offers a chance to complete a 4-day canoe expedition in Sweden on lake 'Stora Le'. Students will travel with staff by plane to Gothenburg before getting a bus and then a train to Ed, just on the southern edge of the lake. From here we buy our supplies and camp by the lake before loading our canoes the next morning and heading into the wilderness on a canoeing and camping adventure for 4 days and 3 nights. This is a once in a lifetime chance to experience nature, adventure and collaboration!

Thursday 5th & Friday 6th June (This activity will not be undertaken by those on the 4-night Sweden trip)

No additional cost

On Thursday 5 June, the day will consist of planning for a team walk taking place on Friday 6 June. We will confirm nearer the time but anticipate this being a shortened day from 1000-1400 to allow for rest and recuperation following the residential visits at the start of the week.

On Friday 6th the students will arrive to school at for 0830 and take hired coaches to 3 different starting locations in the area. The walks take a similar form to the Floreat walking challenge they complete in March this year – however this is longer and tougher and will utilise all the skills they've been developing all year.

Further important details

Contributions and Financial Assistance

Under the Education Reform Act, the cost of each trip is covered by voluntary contributions. While contributions are voluntary, the trip will only go ahead if the full cost is covered through these contributions. If your child is eligible for Pupil Premium funding, we ask that you pay the deposit only, with the remainder of the trip cost being covered by the school's Pupil Premium funds. We are committed to ensuring all students can participate, so if you have any concerns regarding the financial aspect of the trip, please do not hesitate to contact Mr Tom Evans directly. We will handle any enquiries confidentially and sympathetically.

Please note that we both aspire for, and expect EVERY child to attend a trip.

Health & Safety

As part of our Health & Safety procedures, we ask that both you and your child review the school's Code of Conduct for Educational Visits and ensure adherence during the trip.

Please note that while we will do everything possible to ensure the trip runs smoothly, the school cannot control the actions of third-party organisations. In the event of unforeseen circumstances (e.g., health or safety issues, or "Acts of God"), the school reserves the right to cancel or revise the trip at any time without compensation.

The Code of Conduct for Educational Visits will be shared shortly, and it must be followed both before and during the trip.

Next Steps

Costs for each location are currently being finalised, but we expect the 'approximate' costs noted above against each trip to be very close to the precise final costs.

Please take the opportunity to review the available adventures detailed above and discuss the options with your child.

Please ensure that you complete the Microsoft form below stating your child's order of preference for each trip as soon as you are able with the final deadline being Friday 13th February.

[Year 9 Belonging Week – Fill in form](#)

Places will be confirmed shortly afterward, with deposit payments due by February 27th.

While we aim to allocate places based on the preference of residential location, this may not always be possible and will depend on demand. This is not done on a 'first come first served' basis. We will try our best to give as many students as we can their first or second option. We ask that you and your child be willing to embrace which ever trip they get allocated as these trips are about building relationships and character and there are plenty of opportunities to do both on every trip we are offering.

If you have any further questions or would like to discuss any aspect of the week, please contact me, Mr D Tridgell (dtridgell@reading-school.co.uk), as I will be responsible for leading Belonging Week for the year 9 cohort.

Yours sincerely,

David Tridgell
Educational Visits Coordinator