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Geography Trip to the Azores, Years 12, 10 and 9 on 3rd - 7th April 2025

The Geography Department are delighted to announce that we are once again organising a trip to the Azores. The trip will take place from Thursday 3rd – Monday 7th April 2025 and is open to students in Years 12, 10 and 9 studying Geography with the aim to support their studies undertaken at school, particularly volcanic landforms and energy security studied at both GCSE and A Level. The Azores islands were formed through volcanic activity and provide a perfect location to see a verity of volcanic processes and landforms and experience how the islands have harnessed geothermal power.

A wide range of excursions and activities are provisionally planned, including:

- Furnas Valley – interpretation centre and caldera lakes
- Furnas Geothermal Village
- Hot springs, fumaroles and botanical gardens
- Tea plantation visit – grown in the mineral rich volcanic soils
- Whale watching trip
- Lago de Fuego caldera lake
- Caldera Velha hot spring
- Geothermal power plant visit and Salto do Cabrito Waterfall
- Sete Cidades and caldera lake
- Ponta Delgada town exploration
- Walk through the Gruta do Carvao lava tube and caves
- Pineapple plantation visit

The cost of this trip is expected to be approximately £1300. This price is based on 30 students attending this trip. In the event that the trip is oversubscribed, students will be randomly selected.

This price includes:

- Return airport transfers by coach
- ATOL protection
- Full board accommodation
- Professional guides
- All excursions, evening activities, entrance fees and coach transfers whilst in the Azores

This is an **enrichment** trip and is therefore **not a compulsory element of either the GCSE or A level geography course**. However, it would undoubtedly aid your son's understanding and appreciation of some of the key geographical issues connected with plate tectonics, hazards and energy issues.

Once places on the trip are allocated a **deposit payment of £250** will be requested to confirm the intention for your son to participate in this trip and are a commitment to full payment. Deposits are non-refundable.

If your child is in support of pupil premium and you would like to use Reading Promise funding to support his participation, please complete the expression of interest and email tevens@reading-school.co.uk to confirm the funding available.

Once the number of participants on the trip have been confirmed you will be notified should there be any adjustments to the cost and in the event of a significant increase in the cost, be given the option to withdraw.

Visas:

Please note that your son will have to be in the possession of an EHIC/GHIC Card and a Passport valid for the proposed duration of the stay and photocopies of these will need to be sent when requested.

Please note that parents are also responsible for ensuring a student's eligibility to travel: any additional VISA required will have to be arranged by parents at your own cost. Since the pandemic and Brexit there have been some changes to international travel rules.

There is considerable uncertainty in relation to visa arrangements to the Schengen area prior to the introduction of ETIAS in 2023. Ensuring that your son has all the relevant paperwork and the visa's required for entry remains a parental responsibility. As such you should budget accordingly for any associated costs.

In the event of entry being refused to a Schengen country, you would be required to make immediate arrangements for the collection of your son and would not be eligible for any refund.

We are more than happy to provide a visa letter in support of any application, however Reading School staff are unable to offer advice on visa requirements.

Travel Insurance:

Reading School's travel insurance covers all activities taking place during the trip but does not protect against cancellation due to your son's illness, Covid status or other eventualities. Therefore, we recommend that you purchase your own travel insurance to mitigate this risk as refunds cannot be provided.

Under the Education Reform Act, the costs of the visit must be met by voluntary contributions. The visit can only take place if the parents of all participating pupils are prepared voluntarily to meet the full cost. There is no obligation to pay the voluntary contributions, but we must make it clear the trip will not take place if parents are reluctant to support it as there are no other funds available to finance the trip.

If your son is in receipt of Pupil Premium, financial support may be available: please check details of the Reading Promise on the school website and submit any claims using the associated form.

Cases of financial hardship will be dealt with sympathetically and confidentially by the school. Please contact me on the email address below if there are any concerns of this nature.

There are certain precautions we must take before taking your child on the proposed visit. In respect of Health & Safety regulations and insurance, we require the assurance of yourself and your child that the rules of behaviour set out in the Code of Conduct for Educational Visits will be adhered to both before and during the visit.

You will appreciate that the school has no control over the tour operators, airlines, hotels and other organisations involved. By reserving a place on the trip, you and your son accept that the School has no responsibility for the default of the tour operators or other organisations and that in the event of an Act of God or any other circumstance whether involving health and safety, security, behaviour or otherwise, the School can in its discretion curtail, cancel or revise the tour at any time without recompense.

The trip is being booked through an experienced tour company, Discover the World Education. They work closely with us during the whole tour planning process to ensure that your child will get the very best learning experience whilst away.

If you would like your son to take part in this trip please complete this expression of interest form no later than Wednesday 18th September 2024 –

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=QKRT3Wr9XkC75IKx5h6C24qQC7Nwj5IPtA0dNOsy9aRUMIA2NzIUSjFEVkJNjFU4M09FRE02MkpNUC4u>

We hope your son will be able to join us on this exciting trip to one of Europe's most beautiful areas. If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact Dr Young by emailing kyoung@reading-school.co.uk.