



Reading School, Erleigh Road, Reading
Berkshire, RG1 5LW

T: 0118 901 5600

secretary@reading-school.co.uk
www.reading-school.co.uk
Headmaster: Chris Evans

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Year 9 Belonging Week 2025

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.

Residential Trip (2 nights) 2 to 4 June

All students in Year 9 will have the opportunity to take part in a 3-day 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 Canoe Expedition on the Thames, or a multi activity trip to Copenhagen. Each activity has been thoughtfully chosen to provide a carefully curated program of activities tailored to offer the best experiences for our students. 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 opportunities and make selections in due course.

Reach Outdoors

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. Home | Reach Outdoors | Outdoor adventure specialists, Devon

How Stean Gorge

Situated in the heart of the Dales, students are immersed in the beauty of rolling hills and rugged crags. The campsite overlooks the breathtaking limestone gorge with a cave system situated underneath the campsite! Activities are expected to include caving, gorge walking, via ferrata, local hiking, and coasteering. Outdoor Adventures in Yorkshire | How Stean Gorge

Thames Challenge (run by Reading School qualified canoe instructors and Cloud 9 Watersports Instructors)

Sleeping under canvas in campsite locations along the Thames, this engaging three-day canoe expedition is all about adventure and teamwork and determination. Students will develop their paddle skills as they navigate their canoes down long beautiful stretches of the Thames. At the end of each day, they'll pitch their tents; they'll

cook their meals and relax together in the evenings. This really is an opportunity to dip your toe in the world of outdoor expeditioning!

Copenhagen

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, 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.

Thursday 5th & Friday 6th June

On Thursday 5 June, the day will consist of planning for a team walk taking place on Friday 6 June. The walks will depart from three different locations in the area. Further details will be shared closer to the time. The walks take a similar form to the Floreat walking challenge they completed in March – however this is longer and tougher and will utilise all the skills they've been developing all year.

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.

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 and will be provided on the Belonging Week 2025 selections form, which will be shared with your child next week. In the meantime, please take the opportunity to review the available centres detailed above and discuss the options with your child. Students will be invited to complete a Microsoft form link and selections must be made by no later than 7 February. Places will be confirmed shortly afterward, with deposit payments due by Friday, 21 February 2025. While we aim to allocate places based on the preference of residential location, this may not always be possible and will depend on demand.

If you have any further questions or would like to discuss any aspect of the week, please contact Mr D Tridgell (dtridgell@reading-school.co.uk), who will be responsible for leading Belonging Week for the year 8 cohort.

Yours sincerely,

Mr T Evans
Assistant Headteacher