



Dear Parents/Carers,

Year 3/4 Pantomime Trip

Today, I had a really difficult decision to make. The voluntary contributions from parents for the Year 3/4 trip to the panto have again fallen short of covering costs and the school will need to find the money to cover the difference between the cost of the trip and the contributions made. This is almost always the pattern now and it creates a very real and damaging financial strain on the budget at a very challenging time for schools. As a result, the finance team have advised me that the trip should not go ahead. I raised the issue of under-funding of school trips with the governing body recently and they have instructed me that under-funded school trips should not go ahead and need to be withdrawn. As a result, this trip should be cancelled.

I am aware that the children will be very disappointed if this happens and the teachers have done a great deal of preparation and planning for the day and for work to exploit learning from the event next week. Therefore, withdrawing the trip at such a late date will lead to significant ill feeling from the parents who did contribute and will also lead to difficulties for our hard working staff who have planned and given this trip a lot of thought.

I have therefore reluctantly decided that this visit to the theatre will go ahead but that I will now need to justify this to the governors and I will need to demonstrate a robust plan to ensure that in future school trips do not impact negatively on the school budget. I have a plan for this and in future we will not book a trip unless we are sure that we will receive adequate financial support from parents for it to proceed.

Many parents seem to be under the misapprehension that the school profits from school visits. I can assure you that this is never the case and that, in fact, profiting from school visits is illegal. The recommended contribution always leaves school with some shortfall in funding which we can tolerate within the budget but we are currently falling 8-10% per trip below this figure and so our current programme of events would seem to be unsustainable.

About three years ago parents told me that they wanted us to do more in terms of trips and visits as we were too insular and children found school boring. We took this on board and now have very exciting trips and visits to offer in every phase of school, but we cannot sustain this if we are required to pay a premium for each trip due to a lack of parental support for them. I very much hope that parents will support us by helping to contribute to school trips in the future so that we can maintain our brilliant and exciting curriculum which so enriches the learning experience for all our children.

Best wishes,

Paul Brown
Headteacher