



22nd May 2019

Dear Parents/Carers

As most of you will be aware, the History Department runs a four day visit to the Western Front (The First World War Battlefields). The trip is will be aimed at the current Year 8 who have an interest and enthusiasm for learning about the Great War. The trip is to take place between 11th July and 14th July 2020. The focus of this trip will be connecting our local area to the Great War and, therefore, we would be very interested in finding out about family connections/histories regarding this period, in our national history. St James' is very keen not to let the Great War fade away from our national memory and by introducing pupils to their personal connections, we hope to build a foundation for future generations to also remember. The itinerary is as follows:

Day 1 – Ypres, In Flanders Fields: We have an early start from school and travel down to Dover for our EuroTunnel crossing, arriving in France mid- afternoon. We then drive to Flanders and begin our look at the First World War in Flanders, with a visit to **Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery**, enabling us to discuss medicine in WW1, as this was a main Casualty Clearing Station area. We also see the grave of the only nurse killed in Flanders, Nellie Spindler, and see the Visitor's Centre. We then check into our **Hotel in Ypres** and later we enjoy an evening meal in a local restaurant.

Day 2 – Ypres: Today, we look at the battlefields around the city of Ypres where the British Army fought continuously for four years. We see **Tyne Cot Cemetery** to get a sense of the size and scale of the losses in WW1, and also discuss **Manchester Regiment** men, and compare this style of commemoration to the **German Cemetery at Langemarck**. We then have our packed lunches at the **Hooge Crater Café**, where we visit the museum, and also the reconstructed WW1 trenches, seeing how both sides lived and fought. We then travel to **Hill 60** with the chance to see original bunkers and we drive down the **Messines Ridge**, looking at the mining operations that took place there in 1917, and stop at the **Visitors Centre**. We return to Ypres and, after an evening meal in a nearby restaurant, we have time to visit a Chocolate Shop, before we attend the moving **Last Post Ceremony** at the **Menin Gate**. There will also be an opportunity for the school to lay a wreath.

Day 3 – The Somme and Ors: Today we start on the Somme battlefields, where we visit the **Thiepval Memorial to the Missing**, the largest of all British memorials, and see the **Visitor's Centre**: here we discuss the "missing of the Somme" including **Manchester Regiment** men. We then travel to the **Newfoundland Park**, a vast area of preserved trenches, before having lunch at the **Ulster Tower Memorial**, situated on the battlefields where there was heavy fighting in 1916. After lunch, we visit the **Lochnagar Mine Crater**, before travelling to Ors where we follow the stories of both Wilfred Owen and **Victoria Cross winner, James Kirk from Cheadle**, visiting the **Sambre Canal** as part of this. Afterwards we return to our hotel in Ypres and enjoy our evening meal in a local restaurant.

Day 4 – Home: After breakfast we depart Ypres and begin our return journey home. We stop on the way at **Essex Farm**, where we see bunkers used as a medical post in WW1, and where John McCrae wrote the poem *In Flanders Fields*. We also see the grave of **Valentine Joe Strudwick**, who fell near Ypres aged only 15. We then depart for our EuroTunnel crossing in the afternoon, returning to the school in the evening.

Pupils will need to bring their own passport for the trip. The school has purchased insurance with the local authority, but we would advise purchase of your own individual health insurance for your child. The cost of the trip is all inclusive (food, board, museums etc.) but does not cover individual spending money. Pupils will need to ensure that they have sufficient funds to purchase their own evening meal on the return journey on 14th July. At the time of writing this letter pupils will **also need an EHC card available from the Post Office and online.**



ST JAMES'

CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

In order for the trip to take place, parents are asked to make a voluntary contribution of **£389** which covers the tour. The first part of the contribution we are asking for is a **£100, non-returnable deposit** to be sent with the parental consent form by Monday 15th July. **There are 40 places only, which are allocated on a strictly first come, first served basis.** After the initial booking, there will be three more instalments. These will be:

£100 due Tuesday 30th October 2019

£100 due Monday 27th January 2020

£89 due Monday 30th March 2020

Please make cheques payable to St James' Catholic High School and write your child's name on the reverse. This trip can also be paid for using **ParentPay**. Should there be any adjustment to the price of the trip, i.e. if fewer pupils wish to attend than was envisaged, then you will be notified immediately. For all monies forwarded to the school you will receive a receipt and a log will be kept of transactions made. Parents are respectfully reminded that if insufficient contributions are made then the trip unfortunately cannot go ahead.

If you are satisfied with these arrangements, then can I ask you to please complete the attached parental consent form and return it as soon as possible with the £100 **non-refundable** deposit **to the finance office**, with cheques made payable to St. James' Catholic High School by Monday 15th July 2019. If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact us at the school. Once preliminary bookings have been taken there will be an information pack available for those pupils attending.

ALL STUDENTS WILL NEED TO HOLD A CURRENT PASSPORT AND EUROPEAN HEALTH INSURANCE CARD.

Yours sincerely

Mrs L Birch
Head of History
Humanities Faculty

Mr A Pontifex
Headteacher

WESTERN FRONT TRIP JULY 2020

I would like my son / daughter _____ to go on the above trip and agree to pay a voluntary contribution of £389.

Signed _____ Parent/Carer

Date: _____