



BROOKFIELD JUNIOR SCHOOL

Swallow Road, Larkfield, Aylesford, Kent. ME20 6PY
Tel: 01732 843 667 Email: office@brookfield-jun.kent.sch.uk
Web: www.brookfield-jun.kent.sch.uk

Head of School: Mr N South

Executive Headteacher: Mrs P Woods Cert. Ed. NPQH

Dear Parent/Carer

Firstly, apologies for the delay in providing you with the breakdown in costs for the PGL trip.

I am well aware of the issues that some of you have expressed with the cost of the trip and hopefully this will alleviate any concerns, queries, etc. regarding it. I am more than happy to speak with people in person should you still have any further questions.

Providing an exact break-down of costs is not possible, as the package is all-inclusive. As you will be aware, if you purchase an all-inclusive holiday there is no specific breakdown because of the nature of such a package. However, we all like to compare in order to feel that we are getting value for money and so we have looked at doing so, as close as possible, to alternate options.

PGL also do not offer breakdowns either as their costs are not calculated in that way for schools, or indeed parents if you used them for a private group.

I totally understand additional concerns that the price advertised on the website is different to what we have quoted you. As with any holiday, they advertise using their cheapest rates in order to draw people in. I have personally checked with PGL and the price on the website is only relevant to specific times of the year – Post October half-term and pre-Easter. There are no options at this price during the peak season, which is obviously from Easter through to October when weather allows for a really good experience. We have not opted for these periods due to the weather having such an impact on the range of activities that the children can do. Referring to Easter of this year, many activities were cancelled and alternatives offered as a result of the snow and generally freezing weather. They do not give refunds in these instances as that is the reason why the packages are significantly cheaper.

Also to clarify, teachers are **not** paid for by yourselves – for safety in the ratio of adults to children, teachers are free with one free place offered for every ten students. This is done for health and safety, and does not follow the pattern that I know happens on secondary school trips where costs are higher in order to pay for the accompanying adults.

PGL rates are cheaper at weekends as these are the least popular due to staffing, and I am not willing to ask for members of staff to attend an extracurricular activity in their own time. I have personal experience of going on the weekend trips (For 4 consecutive years), and it is not good for the wellbeing of staff. Indeed, it is a huge ask at any time as it puts the teachers on call 24/7 for the duration of the trip in order to meet the needs of the children and their welfare. Can I also highlight that teachers are not paid overtime for any trips – it is time that they give freely (and willingly), so that your children can create some amazing memories.

As you are aware, your children will arrive early afternoon and begin their activities. On the first day, there will be two afternoon activities, and one in the evening. There are no morning activities as you cannot book into PGL before midday due to the setting up of accommodation and other schools

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having their morning ones before they depart (As we will on our final morning). It would not be physically possible for them to run double the amount of groups in a morning (the arriving groups as well as departing), nor would it be safe. On day two, they have 2 in the morning, 2 in the afternoon and 1 in the evening. Day 3 is 2 in the morning. So in total there are 10 activities that your children will experience.

If you look online at similar activities (Such as Centre Parcs and Go Ape), for the former and activities such as Raft Building and The Drop you are looking at £22.50 and £27.00. For Go-Ape, the cost of a junior session at Leeds Castle is £18 for one hour. These average out at £22.50. Therefore, if we look at the cost of all ten activities, this would come to £225. Now, some activities obviously offer better value than others, however I will be directly involved with discussions about this - alongside Yr 5 staff - to ensure the choice of activities reflects both value for money and meets the purpose of the trip, which is for the children to build and develop confidence, embracing challenges and working together in preparation for their transition to secondary school.

Whilst at PGL, the children have all meals catered for – Lunch and dinner on the first; breakfast, lunch and dinner on the second; breakfast and lunch on the final day. Hot and cold options are available at every meal, including breakfast, and there are unlimited options always available on the salad bar – which features not only salad but also pasta options. Obviously for breakfast this would be unlimited cereal and toast. Food is of a good quality and varied and no-one goes hungry. Even if we put this at £5 per meal, this is still incredibly good value for money. So for 7 meals, this would come out at £35.

Remaining costs all go towards the following:

En-suite accommodation – Rooms house up to 6 children on bunk-beds and are very comfy. The cost does not include bedding, as PGL charge an extra £12.50 for this option. Therefore they will need to bring a sleeping bag and pillow.

A PGL leader for each group – The children will be split into (probably) 4 groups. Each group has an assigned PGL leader. They eat with us, do all of the activities alongside us, entertain the children and, most importantly, keep them safe. Every one of these is trained in first-aid and are there first and foremost for the wellbeing of the children. They are invaluable to the experience that the children have.

General upkeep and security – PGL centres are all highly secure, gated areas. They have security teams patrolling all day and night in order to keep your children (and adults) safe. Also, grounds need to be maintained and all activities fully and securely resourced in order to provide the opportunities that they can offer – This is obviously embedded in every paid for event that anyone attends, otherwise places would not be able to keep running.

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As a quick recap:

	Total
Activities @ £22.50 each x 10 = £225	£225
Meals @ £5 each x 7 = £35	£260
Accommodation, PGL Leader, etc = £40	£300

I totally appreciate that my £40 for the final part is completely made-up, however I feel that we would be very hard-pressed to find anywhere that would be providing the same service and accommodation, with designated leaders (4 of and all First-Aid trained), for this cost of approximately £20 per day.

Due to the total cost being higher than that of the Isle of Wight trip, we are looking to fund the coach-trip separately through Year 6 fundraising – which goes on every year to help support costs of trips and experiences for this Year group.

Finally, just to clarify as well our reasons for this trip. The school is changing in many ways, moving forward and looking to offer a lot of opportunities and experiences – as will be evident in how we are looking to change the curriculum and environment over the coming year. These are very exciting times for the school. Some things will stay the same, some things will echo the past (Such as bringing back names for the house teams – don't worry, no colours will change, simply names added to the colour), and others need to evolve.

The Isle of Wight trip has been very successful for a number of years (in excess of 20), and has been a great opportunity for the children. However, the world has changed and that which the children are facing is one in which there are far greater challenges than we faced even a few years ago. Social media, increased peer-pressure, government expectations in tests and the unnecessary stressed caused, video games, etc. The existing trip is superb at showing the children a different world and range of activities, but it does not offer challenge in the same way as PGL. The package at PGL that we have gone for is directly aimed at the following:

- Transition to secondary
- Teamwork
- Resilience
- Determination

In having the opportunity to experience the challenges offered at PGL, these are directly focussed on and the children get to push themselves, and others, in ways that they did not think possible. Look at All Aboard and Jacob's Ladder on the PGL website for an example; a child who doubts his or herself to get higher than they ever thought possible on All Aboard can do amazing things for their confidence. They don't have to complete everything – just going that little step further is enough.

I hope that this reassures you regarding this opportunity and that you find yourselves willing to support us in this change.

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As stated before, should you have any further queries then please, just ask me.

Finally, should we not meet the numbers for this trip, it is highly unlikely to be cancelled – I will simply open the offer up to (next year's) Year 5 group in order to fill the spaces, and give them this fantastic opportunity.

Kind regards

Mr South
Head of School

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