

**13<sup>th</sup> October 2017**

Dear Parents/Carers

**Re: Ski Trip – February 2018**

This week I was contacted by the tour operator to advise that an issue had arisen with regard to our hotel over which they have no control. We were offered alternative accommodation within the same area but after lengthy discussions and negotiations with them we have been offered an upgrade which we are now happy to accept.

This does however mean that we will no longer be going to Andorra, but instead Montgenevre in France. This area was one of my original preferred destinations when looking to organise this trip, but due to the high cost was not deemed feasible. The Montgenevre region lies between France and Italy and offers a wide array of slopes for all abilities with many being through winding forests which offers stunning scenery. It will also allow us to ski in two countries! The journey time is 2 hours shorter than Vallnord, Andorra which is an added bonus.

The chalet hotel we have been able to negotiate is also a huge upgrade for us. The hotel is an Equity 'Club' hotel which means that not only is it smaller, other guests using the accommodation are more likely to be schools or young person groups. The hotel is situated right on the slopes near to the ski lifts and we will have reps from Equity on hand 24/7. The accommodation also offers us a better quality 'down time/après ski' with the students having access to pool tables and football tables. There will be a much more accessible area for us to get together on an evening to socialise as a group. As you can imagine, this will offer us as staff a greater piece of mind whilst allowing the students a lot more freedom inside the accommodation than the previous hotel.

As such, there are some changes to the itinerary. Obviously we will not be able to visit Caldea Spa but we have agreed some wonderful alternative après-ski activities. The most exciting one being a skidoo tour over to the resort of La Coche. Trailers attached to the skidoos will transport us on an exhilarating journey to the mountain in Claviere where we will stop at a traditional mountain restaurant and warm up with hot chocolate crepes before descending back to our hotel. We will also be visiting Durancia Spa which has an outdoor thermal spa. For anyone who has not swum in such a location, this is an absolute must. The warm waters surrounded by the snow is a fantastic experience! Indoor swimming will also be available within the spa. **French rules insist that boys/men will be required to wear Speedo style or cycling shorts during this activity, so please could you ensure that if your child wishes to do this activity they adhere to this and pack the correct attire.** We will also be having a pizza evening where we will go to a local restaurant for our evening meal. Alongside these activities, being in an Equity club accommodation allows us to access a wider array of evening entertainment such as sledging, movie nights, 'killer pool' tournaments and quiz or bingo evenings. For the staff, being able to socialise with the students in a more controlled environment where we have designated spaces allows us to build stronger relationships with them.

Meals will remain on a full board basis. However, we do have the option of coming back to the hotel for a hot meal or taking packed lunches with us to eat up the mountain. For the moment we feel that we are going to leave this option open so the students and staff can decide on what we want to do nearer the time. Upon our return from a chilly day on the slopes the staff will also have hot chocolates ready and waiting for us.

In addition I have had to make some changes with regard to the staff who will be attending the trip. With the departure of Mr Young and Mr Audsley, Miss Barton has also had to drop out due to personal reasons. As you can imagine it has been difficult to choose replacements as all the staff are eager to go! However, I feel that the new staffing structure affords us a fantastic team who are excited to go and spend quality time with the students. These are as follows: -

Mr Barnett (Principal)  
Mrs Robinson (Learning Manager, Key Stage 3)  
Mr Wallis (Head of PE)  
Mr Reeve (Teacher)  
Mr Bellamy (Teacher)  
Mrs Frizzel (Learning Manager, Key Stage 4)

As in my opening paragraph, this change is not one that we have taken lightly. I genuinely feel that the opportunity for this change is one that we could not pass up and offers an opportunity for us to ski in a fantastic resort which has better ski conditions. I will contact you again as soon as I receive confirmation of departure and return times. Within school, we will be holding another ski meeting for the students in the near future. Hoodies will also be altered with the new ski destination. In the meantime please could you ensure that your child has a valid/or you have applied for the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) via <https://www.gov.uk/european-health-insurance-card>. These are free to obtain and we will require to collect these when we collect in passports in January 2018. Please ensure both are in date up until our return date.

Should you wish to discuss any aspect of this change or have any general queries regarding this trip, please do not hesitate to contact myself at the Academy.

Yours sincerely

*J Robinson*

Mrs J Robinson  
Learning Manager - KS3/Lead Trip Organiser