10 May 2011

Dear Parents/Guardian

A2 SNAB Biology Field Trip

Part of the A2 Biology course involves learning about different ecosystems and ways to practically investigate these. In particular, students need to learn about Sand Dune ecosystems and succession, and investigate the animal and plant life on a rocky shore ecosystem. We choose to study these areas of the curriculum on a residential field trip to Pembrokeshire, South Wales. The students also get the opportunity to complete CORE practical work whilst on the residential, which are assessed in the January exam of the A2 course. Finally, we also get the students to complete all of their A2 coursework whilst there. This takes the form of an individual investigation worth 20% of the A2 grade. Completing this on the residential really benefits the students, giving them expert guidance, resources and enabling them to complete the data collection part of the coursework efficiently. It also enables them to complete the vast majority of the write-up to this 3000 word document.

This year we are due to go on the A2 Biology field trip on Wednesday 21st September – Tuesday 27th September 2011. Our field study work will be based and run by the Field Studies Council at the Orielton Field Centre, Pembroke. (You can see a picture of the centre if you go onto the Field Studies Council website, look up Orielton Centre – it gives you information about the exact location and facilities if you need them at this stage)

Below we have highlighted the objectives of the residential course and a preliminary itinerary of our activities during the trip.

Main objectives of the field trip;

- To complete core curriculum areas relating to topic 5 ‘On the wild side’.
  - Explain how the concept of niche accounts for distribution and abundance of organisms in a habitat – rocky shores
  - Describe the concept of succession to a climax community – sand dunes

The areas could be assessed via structured questions or short-answer questions in the Unit 4 Jan 2010 examination.

- To complete core practical activities relating to the study of ecosystems, including measuring biotic and abiotic factors.
  The areas could be assessed via practical-related questions in the Unit 4 Jan 2010 examination.

- To carry out research and complete the practical work needed for the A2 coursework i.e. Unit 6 20% A2 grade
We will carry out the core curriculum and practical activities through a combination of lectures and field work at various sites around the field centre and the local sea shores and woodlands.

Outline itinerary;

Thurs 22nd Sept – Sand Dune Ecology at Freshwater West, measuring species diversity, abiotic factors, T-tests

Fri 23rd Sept – Woodland Ecology in the grounds of the field study centre – practical techniques include Sampling techniques, species diversity indices

Sat 24th Sept – Rocky Shore practical work to show zonation and adaptation to an environment.

Sun 25th Sept – Preliminary practical investigation work and research

Mon 26th Sept – Practical investigation work collecting all necessary data

Tues 27th Sept – Return home after breakfast

We will register in school as normal on Wednesday 21st Sept then leave for sunny Pembrokeshire straight afterwards. Students will be back in school at approximately 4.30pm on Tuesday 27th September.

The cost of the trip is £402 per student and includes all transport, tuition, full board accommodation for 6 days and nights and insurance. Whilst at this stage we can appreciate September is a long way away, we have to book and pay some costs to secure this residential booking at a very popular centre. Below is the timetable for instalment payments for the trip.

Instalment 1 : £ 102 Due by: 27th May

Instalment 2 : £ 150 Due by: 4th July

Instalment 3. £ 150 Due by: 12th Sept

If your son or daughter has every intention of continuing on to A2 Biology it is strongly recommended that they go on this trip. It is a wonderful experience and delivers a very high standard of Biology curriculum, practical and coursework, covering numerous areas of the curriculum in a very concentrated form. The money you pay in instalments can be returned in full should you decide in September that your child can no longer attend the residential for whatever reason (provided you tell us in September at the start of the A2 course).

If you have any further questions at this stage please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

J Blincow

Mrs J Blincow
(‘A’ Level Biology Course leader)
Please return to Student Services Caroline Chisholm School.

I agree to Name of Student:……………………………..…….Form:…………to participate in the A2 Biology Trip to Orielton Field Studies Centre Pembrokeshire from: Wed 21st Sept – Tues 27th Sept 2011. I confirm that payments will be made via ParentPay at www.parentpay.com

My child has no medical condition(s) that you need to be aware of.

My child has the following medical condition(s) that you need to be aware of: (Please delete as applicable)

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Signed:……………………………………………..Parent/Guardian Date:.................................