



THE DOWNS SCHOOL

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19 May 2016

Dear Parents and Carers

Visual and Performing Arts trip to New York – April 2017

Following your son/daughter's application to the Sixth Form, I am delighted to send you information about a Sixth Form Visual and Performing Arts trip to New York City in April 2017. As your son/daughter has applied to study one of the following subjects; Media, Art, Dance, Drama, Performing Arts or Production Arts in the Sixth Form at The Downs School next year, they are warmly invited to apply for a place.

The trip is intended to give students an opportunity to experience their subjects in action in the most exciting city in the world, and promises to be an incredibly enriching experience for all involved. We will of course combine our subject-related activities with the sightseeing this city demands, as you will see in the cost itinerary below. The trip will run in the first week of the Easter holidays 2017, from **Saturday 8 – Thursday 13 April 2017**.

The trip is organised through a company called European Study Tours a well-established provider of educational visits in the market place. For financial protection, European Tours is a fully bonded member of ABTA / ATOL. Further details are available on their website, <http://www.euro-study-tours.co.uk/>. I will be leading the trip supported by other staff from the various Departments involved. The staff to student ratio is 1:12, in line with our trip guidelines and will be planned and fully risk-assessed by an experienced trip leader. The detailed itinerary will be subject to final confirmation but will include the activities listed below.

The cost of this trip includes:

- Airport coach transfers in the UK and USA (departing from and returning to school)
- Return flights from London Heathrow to New York
- 4 night's Bed and Breakfast accommodation in a central location in Manhattan
- 4 evening meals
- Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island visit and tour
- Admittance to the Empire State Building
- Half day coach tour with tour guide - New York TV and movie sites tour
- Ticket to a Broadway show
- 'All Hands on Tech' Workshop – the technical side of theatre
- Entrance to Museum of The Moving Image
- Entrance to the Museum of Modern Art
- Transport and entrance to the 911 memorial
- Fully comprehensive travel insurance. A copy of the policy will be sent to you once places have been confirmed.
- 24-hour local assistance from a tour company representative (Euro Study Tours)

The total for this trip will be approximately £1,250 per student and is payable in instalments up to January 2017. The trip payments will consist of the £200 deposit and then 4 further instalments. Please note that failure to make subsequent payments by the dates specified or to meet other deadlines set in connection with the trip, could jeopardise the place. Also please be aware that the total is currently an estimate based on this year's prices allowing for expected inflation, and the final total will be confirmed once we know the student numbers and when the flights and accommodation are booked. At that point, we will issue a final payment schedule, and we may revise the total up or down if necessary. Every attempt will be made to keep the cost as quoted.

We are expecting this to be a popular trip, so I am keen to make the process of securing a place as fair as possible. If oversubscribed, places will be allocated by a random draw of names from a hat to ensure everybody has equal chance of attending. I will also create a reserve list of students drawn in order. The decision regarding the allocation of places by the school is final.

To be entered in the draw for a place, you must pay the deposit of £200 no later than Friday 17 June 2016 3.30pm. Deposits for students who are not successful following the draw, will be refunded immediately. The deposit is non-refundable for students who gain a place. You will be informed whether or not your son/daughter has been successful or if they have a place on the reserve list. Reserves will have their deposit refunded but should a place become available they will be expected to pay in-line with the payment schedule.

Please post a cheque payment (made payable to ("The Downs School")) to the school address marking the envelope "Finance Office New York 2017", taking care to complete and enclose the slip attached to this letter.

This trip is open to all Downs School students who will be studying one of the mentioned courses in the Sixth Form, therefore your son/daughter must join the Sixth Form in September 2016 to participate. Students who do not join the Sixth Form or leave before the date of the trip will not be eligible to go.

We will be open to suggestions regarding fund raising activities/ideas although these must be presented to me in the first instance and will need to be given approval before they can take place. Following the Government pupil premium funding arrangements, LIFT/EVER6FSM/FSM students can receive a contribution of £100 towards the cost of this trip (if they obtain a place). Please note that by applying for a place, you will be under an obligation to pay the subsequent payments if your child is successful. They should ensure they have completed the necessary paperwork and must pay the initial deposit to be entered for the draw.

Please bear in mind that if you cancel your child's place at any time before departure, cancellation charges will apply on a sliding scale. Full details are available on request from me. As already mentioned, the deposit is non-refundable unless your child is unsuccessful in obtaining a place or the trip is cancelled by the school.

Students will need to provide money for the following, so allowance for additional spending is also required:

- any other food or drinks they may wish to purchase – including all lunches.
- public transport in New York on occasions
- any additional sightseeing that is not included in the list above
- there will be time made available for shopping

Some of the students' free time may be unsupervised but at all times students will be expected to follow the rules laid out by the staff at The Downs School, and those of the Tour Company and hotel. There will be some travel on public transport in New York. There will be a Code of Conduct issued which will need to be signed by both the parent and student.

Students will travel on their own passports and expiry dates should be checked NOW! It is essential that your son/daughter has a biometric passport for entry to the US. Please check that this is the case and also the expiry date. If not, you will need to renew your passport.

If your child has a non-UK passport and is allocated a place, you will be required to let me know as soon as possible and you are responsible for checking the situation concerning visas etc.

UK Passport holders will not need a visa to travel to America as we shall travel under the Visa Waiver Programme. Under this programme, passengers must have obtained travel authorisation using the Electronic System for Travel Authorisation (ESTA). This costs \$14 per person and must be paid by credit or debit card prior to travel. This requirement is in addition to the submission of passport information, which is still required. **Each individual traveller must register on-line on the following website:** <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/esta>

Acceptance on the trip is dependent on their good behaviour and attitude and we reserve the right to refuse to take those students whose poor behaviour may tarnish the good name of The Downs or whose actions may put themselves or others in danger. We also reserve the right to withdraw any student whose behaviour at school deteriorates between now and the departure date. In these situations, refunds may be made at the school's discretion.

We very much hope that your child will be able to participate in this exciting trip we are offering. If you would like any further details please do not hesitate to contact me via the school email. I shall also be arranging an information evening at school before our departure.

Yours faithfully

S. Blake

Miss S. Blake
Trip Leader

Visual and Performing Arts trip to New York: April 2017 - Request for Place

**Please return together with your £200 deposit to the Finance Office post box
by 3.30pm on Friday 17 June 2016 in an envelope marked 'New York 2017'**

Cheques made payable to "The Downs School"

Name of Student (please print) _____

I give permission for my son / daughter to take part in the trip to New York as set out in the letter and I confirm that I would like her / his name included in the draw for a place.

I enclose a cheque for £200 for the deposit. I understand that this is non-refundable if a place is secured.

I understand that my son / daughter must join the Sixth Form in September 2016 to be able to participate.

I understand that this means that if successful I will be required to pay the cost of the trip in 4 further instalments details of which will be given to me if a place is confirmed.

I accept that the decision regarding the allocation of places by the school is final.

My son/daughter is (please circle if applicable and you intend to register with the school)

LIFT / FSM / EVER6FSM

Signature of Parent/Carer _____ Date _____

Name (please print) _____

Contact telephone number _____

Email address _____