

14th September 2017

Dear Parent / Guardian,

Your son or daughter has expressed an interest in taking part in the Year 12/13 Visit to PMM School in Uganda. PMM is our link school, with whom we have been partnered for fourteen years. This is the fourth time we have taken a party of students to PMM, the last occasion being in 2016.

Visit dates: Thursday 12th July to Monday 30th July 2018 inclusive.

The main purpose of the visit is to deepen our students' understanding of the culture and society in an African country. As well as carrying out activities at PMM including a joint project, we will be participating in life at the school for one week. Last time, we took part in lessons and an assembly, played team games with PMM students and visited the sponsored girls' homes. It is a remarkably good way of finding out about a culture very different to our own. We also visited local attractions with PMM students and teachers as our guides. We plan to do the same again this time.

As well as learning about Africa through first-hand experience, our students will benefit by working as a team, taking on leadership roles and practising their communication skills, for example talking with and listening to groups of PMM students. They will also be expected to raise funds, partly to subsidise the cost of the visit (and reduce the burden to you) and partly as a charitable donation to PMM itself. Previously, money raised in this way has supported construction of a dining shelter and kitchen at PMM. In the UK, university admissions tutors are increasingly looking at what other experience students can bring to the table in making offers of places for degree courses.

The second reason for the visit is to experience two of the largest of Uganda's beautiful national parks. There is a host of wildlife to spot, including 'The Big Five', plus many other animals. We will be chimpanzee tracking in Kibale Forest and taking a boat trip up the Victoria Nile to the spectacular Murchison Falls, the highest on the Nile, where we will take a walk around the falls to the top.

This is a unique opportunity to travel, broaden the mind, finding out about Africa and our link school, with possibilities for setting up a gap year in Uganda in the future.

The cost of the trip is £2500. Further details about payment can be found on the attached INFORMATION SHEET. This sheet also covers the inclusion policy and the refunds policy of the trip.

The deadline for returning the reply slip is **Friday 29th September 2017.**

The deadline for making the first payment instalment is **Friday 13th October 2017.**

There will be an introductory **Evening Meeting** for parents and students, who wish to find out more, on **Monday 25th September at 7.00pm in the school hall.** If you are unable to attend, you can contact me by phone or email (jgb@strs.org.uk) for more information if you wish.

Yours faithfully,

J G Buttle, PMM Link Co-ordinator

STRS VISIT TO PMM SCHOOL and UGANDA 2018

INFORMATION SHEET

Provisional Itinerary

Thursday 12th July 2018	Leave UK: Flight – either Heathrow, Gatwick or Birmingham, to Entebbe, Uganda (one change, probably Dubai tbc)
Friday 13th July	Arrive Entebbe. Stay at hotel in Entebbe or in Kampala (tbc)
Saturday 14th July	Arrive Jinja: Accommodation – Nile Hotel, Jinja. Comfortable rooms with mosquito nets and TV, yet not too ostentatious – food pretty good, especially breakfast (8 nights)
Sunday 15th to Saturday 21st July	In Jinja. Project at PMM School: join in lessons and maybe teach a lesson (younger pupils), visit the sponsored girls' homes, participate in shared activities and visits, painting and one other project
Sunday 22nd to Monday 23rd July	Visit Kibale Forest NP: Accommodation – in Fort Portal (tbc)
Tuesday 24th July	Travel on bumpy roads! Accom – Kolping Hotel, Masindi
Wednesday 25th to Friday 27th July	Visit Murchison Falls NP: Accommodation – Bwana Tembo Safari Camp (3 nights)
Saturday 28th July	visit Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary: Accom – Ziwa Hostel (1 night)
Sunday 29th July	Drive to Entebbe and depart Uganda (one flight change)
Monday 30th July	Arrive back in UK

Please Note: *the dates of this trip mean we will miss the last week and two days of term at STRS. Additionally, we may have to alter the accommodation, if any of the hotels/hostels are fully booked.*

Purpose of the Trip

- To visit our link school, PMM Girls' School, and carry out joint projects there.
- To experience and learn about a different culture first-hand, forging relationships.
- To travel around Uganda, visiting two National Parks to see dramatic wildlife and scenery.
- To allow you the opportunity to demonstrate leadership, teamwork, communication and fundraising skills.

Accommodation and Travel

- Travel is by four-wheel drive bus, with a driver and a guide. We are using the Ugandan Company 'Alpha beta Rentals' for this. Our guide has worked as a ranger for the Ugandan Wildlife Authority (UWA). There are two days, which involve a lot of travel on bumpy roads. If you suffer from travel sickness, this trip is probably not for you.
- We will be staying in hotels and hostels. Each place we are staying is different and so the room arrangements will be different. However, each student will always share a room with at least one other of the same gender. Each bed will have a separate mosquito net.

Other Factors

- Ø Uganda is quite hot (26°C) at the time of year we are travelling and we have a plentiful supply of bottled water. Please make sure you have the right clothing.
- Ø You will be travelling with the same people for two and a half weeks. Getting along with others will be an important part of the trip. You will also be interacting with people from a very different culture. We hope you will see this as an important way of developing your leadership, team working and social skills.
- Ø Ugandan food contains a lot of carbohydrates and can be very bland. Although we will mostly be eating at cafes and restaurants where there will be more variety, we will also dine at the PMM canteen. Therefore, be prepared to sample unusual flavours and textures. *If you have any allergies or food intolerances, please speak to Mr Buttle.*
- Ø Unless you have travelled to Africa recently, you will need vaccinations for this trip; as well as the usual childhood vaccinations, you will probably need: typhoid, hepatitis A and B, **yellow fever** (and meningitis ACWY). Your own doctor's surgery should advise you.
- Ø You will need a passport and a yellow fever vaccination certificate to enter Uganda. You will need to take anti-malarial tablets whilst in Uganda.

Important Dates and Costs

- Ø **The cost is £2500.** This is payable in four instalments, the first in October. You can pay by cheque or by Internet Payment on line. The cost covers everything except vaccinations, anti-malarial tablets, souvenirs and snacks. In 2016, we charged £2400.
- Ø We have to charge more than the actual cost to include a contingency fund.
- Ø **29th September 2017:** Deadline for signing up by returning reply slip to JGB
PLEASE DO NOT PAY YET!
- Ø **By 6th October 2017:** We will let you know by letter whether you have been successful. We will also send a full medical consent form and a second passport information form at the same time.
- Ø **13th October 2017: Deadline for payment of first instalment of £800 (non-refundable, to cover the cost of flights) and for returning the medical consent form and passport information form. To secure your place, you must comply with this request.**
- Ø **1st December 2017:** Deadline for payment of second instalment of **£600**
- Ø **2nd February 2018:** Deadline for payment of third instalment of **£550**
- Ø **24th April 2018 at 7pm: Final Information Evening for parents and students**
- Ø **4th May 2018:** Deadline for payment of final instalment of **£550**

Cancellation and Refunds Policy

If you withdraw from the trip, we regret that we will not be able to refund the first £800 payment but we will endeavour to refund as much of the remaining balance as possible. The amount we can refund will be dependent on the period of cancellation we receive. The more notice, the greater the refund that will be possible.

Inclusion Policy

This visit is open to students in Year 12 and Year 13. Unfortunately, for practical reasons the maximum number of students we can accept on the trip is 16. If the trip is oversubscribed, we may have to select between students. We will, if necessary, ask you to write a short letter, saying how you think you will benefit from participating in the visit. In the case of oversubscription from suitable applicants, selection will be on a “names out of a hat” basis. If a place becomes available at a later date, a further name will be selected from the hat. We will write to you in the week beginning 2nd October to let you know whether you have been successful in gaining a place.

Fundraising

- o We expect you to participate and even to be proactive in fundraising activities for the trip and for PMM dining area fund. We will split all money from joint fundraising activities 50:50 between the PMM fund and towards your own trip cost. {We keep a separate tally of each member’s contribution to enable us to do this fairly.}
- o This time we are setting a **personal target** for you to **raise a minimum of £500** towards your own costs. This money will be reimbursed to you after the trip. Your share of the joint fundraising will contribute towards this total (at 50%) but you may need to supplement it by doing some individual fundraising.
- o Last year, we raised money jointly by:
 - holding cake sales (about five of these)
 - bag packing at Sainsbury’s, Morrison’s and Tesco’s (three in total)
 - organising a sponsored bike ride from Sir Thomas Rich’s grave to STRS
 - holding a raffle
- o We will repeat some of these fundraising events this year. The most profitable events last time were bag packing and the bike ride. Therefore, we expect you to **make yourself available** to participate in the major fundraising events. This means organising your diary/life accordingly! We will provide a list of fundraising events and dates shortly. If you are in Year 12 the fundraising aspect of the visit could also provide you with much useful material when completing your UCAS personal statement.
- o If you have any suggestions of your own about fundraising, either as a group or as an individual, you are warmly encouraged to discuss these with us.

The Staff

- o Mr Robin Parker, English
- o Mrs Sue Bain, Pupil Admissions
- o One other member of staff

John Buttle, STRS-PMM Link Coordinator 11/9/17

jgb@strs.org.uk

Reply Slip

Please return to JGB by Friday 29th September 2017

Trip organiser: John Buttle

Trip: UGANDA TRIP (2018)

Date of trip: 12th July 2018 to 30th July 2018

Name of Pupil.....Form

Emergency Contact Name.....

Emergency Contact Numbers

If your child has any medical conditions and/ or is taking medication, please give brief details below:

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NOTE: We will write to let you know if you have been accepted on the trip in the week beginning 2nd October. A full medical consent form will be sent with the letter of acceptance. We will also require passport information to book airline tickets. If successful, please complete this additional information and return with the first instalment of payment by Friday 13th October 2017.

Signature of Parent:

Date: