Samares School

Residential Trip: Procedure for Children Requesting to Return Home

Purpose of this Guidance

Our priority is to ensure the safety, wellbeing, and positive experience of all children during the residential visit. While we encourage all pupils to stay and fully participate, we understand that some children may feel homesick or anxious. Although this is a rare occasion, this document outlines the procedures in place should a child express a wish to return home. This will be shared with parents before children attend a residential visit and will be on our school website.

1. Initial Response and Support

- If a child becomes upset or expresses a wish to go home, staff will:
  - Provide reassurance and comfort.
  - Listen to the child's concerns and acknowledge their feelings.
  - Use distraction, calming techniques, and positive encouragement to help the child settle.
  - Allow the child time and space, while maintaining close supervision.
- The trip leader will monitor the situation closely.
- In many cases, homesickness lessens after initial reassurance.

2. Parental Contact

- If, after initial support, the child remains unsettled or continues to express a desire to go home, staff will contact parents or carers to:
  - Inform them of the situation.
  - Discuss the child's wellbeing.
  - Work together on strategies to help the child remain on the trip, where appropriate.
- Staff will always act in the child's best interests and consider their emotional state carefully.

3. Decision to Return Home

- If, after reasonable interventions, it is agreed that returning home is in the child's best interest:
  - The trip leader will make a joint decision in consultation with parents.
  - Practical arrangements for collection will be agreed.
  - Parents/carers are responsible for collecting their child from the residential site.
  - The school will not release a child to anyone not authorised by the parent/carer.
  - Staff will prepare the child for departure in a calm and supportive manner.

4. Follow-Up After Return

- Staff will contact parents following the trip to:
  - Review the child's experience.
  - Offer pastoral support if needed.
  - Help the child reflect positively on the parts of the trip they did participate in.

Important Notes for Parents

- Preparing your child in advance can help reduce anxiety (discussing sleeping arrangements, sharing positive expectations, etc).
- If appropriate, arrange a sleep-over at a family members or a friend's house to try out sleeping away from home.
- We ask parents not to pre-arrange pick-ups or suggest the option of coming home unless advised by school staff, as this can heighten anxiety.