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Dear Parent/Carer

I hope that your son/daughter has had a positive year so far and has enjoyed the start of GCSE Separate Sciences

As part of the GCSE Biology course, students complete a number of required practical's as set out by the exam boards. One of these practical's is ecological fieldwork. This can be undertaken within the school grounds or at any other suitable location.

We would like to give students studying GCSE Biology the opportunity to carry our fieldwork at RSPB Minsmere, a nature reserve on the Suffolk coast. This requires transport by coach from the school. This is an excellent opportunity to see an area of outstanding natural beauty with rare animals, plants and ecosystems. The area has been used recently for the BBC show Springwatch. While there, students will complete a number of field studies looking at the distribution of species and the environmental factors which affect their populations. They will also be able to learn first-hand about the work that goes on at the reserve to conserve and protect a number of rare and endangered species of plants and animals. The data the students collect will actually be helping the volunteers and staff at Minsmere to monitor the health of these important ecosystems.

The date of the trip will be either 20th June or 21st June. The students will be split in half to attend on either day. Nearer the time, and once we know confirmed numbers students will be told which day they will attend. The fieldwork will be a great opportunity for students to learn skills and acquire knowledge directly linked to the specification they are studying. It is highly recommended that they attend, however it is not a requirement. If they cannot attend for whatever reason these skills and content will be taught at school in a classroom environment or within the school grounds.

As with all school trips there is a certain amount of risk. In this instance students will be travelling a short distance by coach and conducting fieldwork near the coast. At the site students will be told not to attempt to enter the sea as the currents are always particularly strong. We will also advise students about the risks of handling living organisms and ensure this is done safely and hygienically. We expect full cooperation from the students regarding this, to ensure everybody's safety when on site.

The coach will be leaving the school at approximately 9.00am and returning at 3.15pm. The students will need to bring lunch and drink. In case of changeable weather we also recommend students bring sun cream, hats and waterproof jackets as appropriate. There is a small café and a shop that we may be able to visit at the end but this will depend on timings.

For the trip to run we will require parents to give a voluntary contribution of £18 per student. This will cover entry to the reserve, transport, staffing and insurance costs. If we do not receive enough money to cover the cost, the main one being the coach, the trip will not be able to go ahead.

Please make payment via ParentPay by Wednesday 31st May, you do not need to return a consent form. As payment is made you will be asked to consent to the following:

I consent to my child taking part in this activity. I acknowledge that the staff will be liable in the event of any accident only if they have failed to take reasonable care of my child during the visit.

I consent to my child receiving medical treatment which, in the opinion of a qualified medical practitioner, may be necessary.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need further information.

Yours sincerely



Mr J Parks
Head of Biology