

Raasay parents' meeting 7th September 2010

I am delighted to once again be organising the annual S2 residential – one which has gone from strength to strength since being set up in 2004 and which is enjoyed thoroughly by pupils and staff alike. The Raasay experience, and the Outdoor Centre there, have been tried and tested by a number of schools, including ourselves, and come highly recommended. They provide a tailored, flexible programme, enhanced each year following feedback from us, which is designed to develop both pupils' personal and interpersonal skills.

This year sees a slightly different organisation to the groups attending, due to the increased number of pupils in the year group. The venture is organised into three groups: pupils in Arthur and Fraser take part from 18th - 22nd September inclusive, with those from Temple attending between 22nd - 26th September and those from Morrison between 26th - 30th September.

A total of 17 staff are accompanying the 3 groups to Raasay: 7 staff accompanying the larger 1st group, 5 with Temple and 5 with Morrison. Mr Richmond will oversee the organisation of the trip as well as taking responsibility for the first group; Mrs Graham will take responsibility for the second group and Mr Menzies will take responsibility for the third group. Mr Horgan is the member of the Senior Leadership Team with oversight of the venture.

Departure times

- **Group 1 (Arthur and Fraser): meet at the War Memorial on Great Western Road by 7:45am on Saturday 18th September 2010. We are aiming for the 3pm ferry from Sconser to Raasay (half hour sailing). Pupils should return to The Glasgow Academy at approximately 9pm on Wednesday 22nd September.**
- **Group 2 (Temple): meet at the War Memorial on Great Western Road by 7:45am on Wednesday 22nd September 2010. We are aiming for the 3pm ferry from Sconser to Raasay (half hour sailing). Pupils should return to The Glasgow Academy at approximately 10:30pm on Sunday 26th September. This later timing is due to the Sunday ferry service. Please note Monday 27th is a holiday, so pupils are not expected in school.**
- **Group 3 (Morrison): meet at the War Memorial on Great Western Road by 9am on Sunday 26th September 2010. We are aiming for the 4:30pm ferry from Sconser to Raasay (later Sunday service- half hour sailing). Pupils should return to The Glasgow Academy at approximately 9pm on Thursday 30th September.**

Pupils may bring a packed lunch or a small amount of money, as we will be stopping at Fort William for a lunch break. Please note, however, that no food or drink is allowed to be consumed on the Parks coach - pupils should be familiar with this from Saturday fixtures.

Activities

Whilst at Raasay, pupils will experience 6 half-day activities. These are chosen carefully by the Outdoor Centre instructors depending on the weather forecast that day. In the past, pupils have had the chance to experience rock-climbing, abseiling, archery, crating, kayaking, sailing, mountain biking and a Raasay Explore (an expedition with a difference, including the chance to partake in bog racing!)

The evening sees pupils partaking in team building activities, which may include the 'Raasay Experience', Games or Beach Art. Again, these are dependent on the expertise and particular interest of individual instructors, many which have been there since Raasay Outdoor Centre was set up many years ago. Their experience is complemented by a good mixture of well-qualified new instructors who may have been there for one or two seasons.

Equipment and clothing

A copy of the kit list is available to view on the school website, but particular attention is drawn to:

Waterproof - ensure this is robust and not just a showerproof jacket, for example.

Rucksack - essential to carry extra layers, lunch etc. when out on activities

Lunch box and durable water bottle - avoids soggy sandwiches and leaks in bags!

Plastic bag(s) for wet clothing - enough said!

Pupils are advised to arrange with friends the sharing of such items as hair dryers and straighteners. There is not enough capacity for all room occupants to have their own and sharing helps reduce the amount of luggage necessary for the trip.

Money

There is not much opportunity to buy things whilst on Raasay. We will not be visiting the village; however, the shop in the Centre will be open to pupils each morning, allowing the purchase of small items such as snacks and souvenirs. All pupils have received a pocket money envelope, which is due to be returned by Friday 10th September 2010. This should contain a maximum of £25, consisting of relatively small denominations; please indicate on the label the various amounts of each quantity contained within the envelope. Envelopes should be handed directly to either Mrs Ruddock (pupils in Arthur and Fraser) or Mr Richmond (pupils in Temple and Morrison) on or before Friday 10th September 2010. **Pupils must sign for their money when handing it in, so please do not post or hand envelopes into the Administration Centre or tutors.** Pupils will be issued with a small amount of money each day, which they are responsible for thereafter; for this reason, **please only enclose the denominations indicated on the label.**

Timings for each day

Breakfast is around 8am (cereal and toast, with the option of a cooked breakfast as well if wished for).

Pupils are then responsible for making their own lunches with the ingredients provided: white/brown bread, margarine, condiments, salad, meat/fish etc.

The 'bank' & tuck shop are then open prior to pupils meeting with instructors in the lounge (promptness is essential, as is the correct clothing ready for the day ahead)

Pupils complete a morning activity and, with the exception of those taking part in rockclimbing/abseiling, return to the Centre for lunch, which often includes soup in addition to the lunch made up earlier in the day by pupils. An afternoon activity follows, with some subsequent free time before dinner, which is usually around 6pm (there is not normally a choice here, but there is always a vegetarian option available – **please let us know of particular dietary issues** on the form which was due to be returned by Monday 6th September).

After dinner, pupils partake in evening activities, with supper around 8.30pm. There is then some reflection time in tutor groups/Houses, where pupils will be completing their Raasay 2010 booklets/diaries (given to them on the coach to Sconser); these should help towards pupils' subsequent Raasay House assembly. Please can pupils, therefore, bring a pencil, pen, notebook, etc. with them?

Medicines

Miss Calder, Mrs Macdonald and Dr Monaghan will be responsible for the safe keeping of all pupils' medicines for each respective group. Pupils should hand their clearly labelled medicines, including those that are self-administered, to the relevant member of staff on boarding the coach. Please ensure inhalers are brought where necessary.

Safety and emergency procedures

Please ensure the medical and emergency contact forms are returned and are as up to date as possible- these were due by Monday 6th September 2010.

A risk assessment has been carried out and will be held with the Administration Centre for the duration of the trip. Parents are able to view this on request. In addition, Raasay Outdoor Centre also has its own.

There have been no major incidents so far (nothing serious - only the odd scrape or bump with mountain-biking or rock-climbing). We are aware, however, that incidents could happen, and there is a resident nurse/doctor on the island, plus the option to ferry pupils across to the hospital on Skye. In extreme circumstances, which are highly unlikely, the option of an emergency helicopter is possible.

If parents need to make contact with pupils whilst they are on Raasay, they may either contact the Centre via the usual school telephone number or alternatively use

the SLT mobile number (held with Mr Horgan for the duration of the trip): 07923 224289. The member of staff responsible for the Group will then return your call.

Other

Dorms will accommodate up to 5 or 6 pupils (with the possibility of smaller numbers for the Temple and Morrison groups). Pupils have all filled in a 'Friends form' and we will do our best to ensure they are with at least one of their choices for their dorm and activity groups.

Girls are located on one floor with boys on the other. The **Golden Rules** are that the only dorm you enter is your own, there is no eating/drinking or chewing gum in the dorms, and corridors are not to be used for socialising (there is plenty of space for pupils to socialise elsewhere).

For extremely serious offences, the ultimate sanction is that a pupil will be sent home (with parents requested to come and collect them) – we do not envisage this happening as we are confident the behaviour of this year's pupils will be as exemplary as that in previous years. Both pupils and parents have signed a **code of conduct** (a copy of which is available to view on the school website) and are well aware of what it contains.

Pupils may bring their own cameras, though it is possibly best to bring a disposable one. The Glasgow Academy's digital cameras will be taken & used by all groups, with plenty of opportunity for pupils to snap away. The best photographs inevitably end up in the *Chronicle*.

Conclusion

As well as all the adventurous activities, Raasay's location, its history, its geography and geology all give the opportunity for a variety of non-sporting activities such as beach sculptures and drama. During their Raasay venture, pupils will experience a new environment, new challenges, new values, new ways of working, new relationships with staff, new expectations, new opportunities, new levels of support, and new ways of thinking and learning. We hope very much that they will see new sides of themselves and others, and above all have tremendous fun!

Mr P A Richmond
Head of Fraser House
S2 Raasay residential coordinator

