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EDUCATIONAL VISITS AT MACKIE ACADEMY KEY PRINCIPLES 2023 ONWARDS

Background

A consultation took place with the parent body of Mackie Academy 2022 following two years where educational visits had not happened due to the Covid pandemic. The consultation focused on:

- The purpose of educational visits at Mackie Academy
- Re-establishing a residential visits programme at Mackie Academy in terms of
 - Cost and limitations
 - Timescales for payment
- The difference between core and extra-curricular provision

The feedback received from 123 responses forms the basis of this proposal that will be shared with parents, staff, and students at Mackie Academy for further informed discussion in the winter term of 2022, leading to a finalised plan at the start of 2023.

Core Provision and visit experiences

Mackie Academy is, through the support of the Excelerate programme, redesigning its approach to project-based learning through the Broad General Education (S1 to S3). In 2022-23 all S1 students are participating in an "Explorers" course which is built on the principles of project-based learning, which is engrained in their learning experiences from primary school.

In 2023-24 these principles will be further developed through the S2 Electives programme that currently exists at Mackie Academy in a way that allows our young people to engage in a topic area they enjoy but with a consistency that builds on the skills learnt in S1.

Finally, in S3 2024-25 a new Pathway Finder course will expose our young people to the world of work in a way that allows them experiences and opportunities that may inform future choices around their studies and the world of work. Again, the principles of learning will be embedded in S1 and S2 with extension in S3 based upon the work currently being completed around our School Leaver Profile.

It is intended to build an educational visits provision within this structure as follows:

S1: all students will be involved in a 3-day programme in May whereby they engage in a showcase of their work through the Explorers course. This will end with an event where parents can come into school and be taken through the learning by their children. The three days will involve the staff who have worked with them during the year, external providers and local visits that enhance their learning. There will be no cost attached to this learning experience.

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S2: all students will be involved in two days of learning associated with the elective they have chosen. This may occur locally and / or further afield and may have a residential aspect to it depending upon their elective. On their return to school they will spend their third day creating a display about their elective to inform the year below about the opportunities each elective brings. This will take place in May. Any student on FSM will have the cost of their choice met and options will be available for all others to participate in.

S3: a learning experience will be made available to all students related to pathways associated with the local economy and development which they will have experienced during the course of the year. This will take place in May and will provide both day and residential options for students to choose from with a range of costs catered for.

Extra-curricular day visits

Subjects and Faculty teams will continue to offer day visits linked to curricular provision that enhance the learning experience. A hardship fund will have a limited resource to help anyone who wishes to participate but may struggle to do so on financial grounds. Day visits can take place during term time but are dependent on staffing being able to be covered in school.

There is no expectation that a day visit, which is not core curriculum provision, has the capacity to be offered to all of the students in that year group and / or subject area e.g. if there is only capacity for 40 places then students would be given the opportunity to register their interest and if more than 40 do so a ballot would determine those attending and a waiting list.

Extra-curricular residential visits

Where staff wish to do so residential visits can be planned and offered to students from January 2023 onwards. UK and foreign destinations can be considered within guidance set out by Aberdeenshire Council.

Each proposed trip will be considered on its educational merits, cost, and risk assessment. Residential visits will take place outside of term time. This is because staffing constraints in school would make it impossible for a large number of staff to be out of school for a number of days at a time. This does not mean we cannot consider a short incursion into term time to accommodate travel requirements.

A payment plan will be a necessary part of any residential trip as will the opportunity for all who wish to participate to be given the opportunity to express an interest. Should there be more interest than places a ballot system will be used to determine those who go and a waiting list.

Where appropriate fundraising and grant provision can be considered by the trip organisers to reduce the cost for those participating but it would not be appropriate for whole school fundraising efforts to be used for this purpose.

L.Moir
Head Teacher
25.11.22