September 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

In March 2021, with the assistance of World City Links, OIEA submitted a bid to the Turing Scheme, for funding to support an educational visit for our 2021-22 Year 10 students to Thailand. In July, we were thrilled to receive news that our bid had been successful. This bid will mean that the trip is heavily subsidised and will be accessible to our students. Please see overleaf for more information.

The Turing Scheme is a UK Government scheme to provide funding for international opportunities in education across the work, to offer students life-changing learning experience in another country. The scheme aims to forge new relationships across the world and to support equal access to all students and learners, regardless of their background, and to give participants vital skills to bridge the gap between education and the world of work.

We have chosen Bangkok, Thailand as our location, for a number of reasons. We know that the many students have found that the last 18 months of the pandemic have affected their well-being and mental health. Visiting Thailand, a predominantly Buddhist country, will give our students a very different perspective on how to deal with change and challenge. Also, our Governor, Trevor Hunter, has a longstanding commitment to providing eye-care for students at a residential school for young people with special educational needs in Bangkok. Our students will visit the school and we hope will be the start of a long-term link between OIEA and Rainbow House in Bangkok.

The planned departure date for the visit is 31st March 2021. Students will spend 6 days in Bangkok. The dates may change slightly due to the availability of flights. Whist they are in Bangkok, our participants will have:

* Two days sightseeing. The exact activities will be confirmed after discussion with the students but may include visits to Buddhist Temples, and Elephant sanctuary, markets and a boat trip.
* Three days visiting the Prayamonthaturadsrip School in Bangkok where they will experience education in a Thai school and meet Thai students of a similar age.
* One day visiting Rainbow House in Nonthburi, Bangkok.

Mr Forster, Mrs Marriott and Miss Ferns are leading the trip. There will also be a member of staff from World City Links to support in Bangkok. There are places on the trip for 16 students maximum. Students will stay in a 4\*or 5\* hotel. World City Links usually use the Sukosol Hotel in Bangkok, however if this is not available a hotel of a similar standard will be used.

Students will have breakfast at the hotel. All other meals will be eaten in restaurants and cafes or at the school. Please note that students will be eating Thai food for the most part. There will not be access to ‘Western’ style food at all meals. Also, please note that peanuts and groundnut oil are intrinsic parts of Thai cuisine. World City Links have confirmed that it is **NOT** possible to ensure that food does not contain these ingredients. If you have any queries about this, please contact Oliver Forster in advance.

Students who have a place on the visit will be expected to become part of ‘Team Thailand’ This involves:

* Most importantly being super-positive, getting fully involved, challenging themselves and having fun.
* Meetings after school every fortnight for planning and team building
* Take part in fundraising for Rainbow House
* Visit a Thai restaurant and Buddhist Temple in the UK before the visit
* Work with our RE and PSHE teams to incorporate their experiences into our lessons going forwards.
* Report back on the visit in a group to our Governors.

All of the flights, hotel costs and organisational costs incurred by World City Links are paid for through the grant from the Turing Scheme. Travel Insurance is paid for via the Ormiston Academies Trust insurance. In total this is approximately £1550 per student.

The following is not covered by the grant from the Turing Scheme.

* Coach to and from the airport
* Visit to a Buddhist Temple in UK and Thai meal in UK
* Lunch and Evening meals in Thailand and airports.
* Activities in Thailand

The cost per students in £375. If a student is eligible for Pupil Premium, the cost is £150. Parents can choose to pay in one instalment in October, or in four instalments from October to February. (Note – Figures in brackets are for students who are eligible for Pupil Premium.

* October: £125 deposit (£40)
* November: £75 (£40)
* January: £75 (£30)
* February: £100 (£40)

It is important to note that payments are non-refundable if a student drops out of the trip unless for specified reasons that are covered (e.g., death of a close family member or serious ill health), unless a student can be found to replace them. This is because there are costs incurred with World City Links, that would need to be covered, if a student did not attend the trip. Please note the insurance schemes are currently not covering Covid under their ill health policy. Please speak to me if you have any queries over this.

We also suggest that students will need £15 per day for spending money. Students will need a valid UK passport with at least 6 months to run. We do not yet know if Thailand or the UK governments will insist on COVID vaccinations for travel. However, there is discussion in the media that this may happen, so please be aware and prepared.

So now for the key question, how do students get selected for the trip.

* 4th October – Application letters – no more than 150 words – handed in to Mr Forster, Mrs Marriott or Miss Ferns, along with consent form from parents/carers to apply.
* Wednesday 6th Oct to Tuesday 12th Oct. Students meet with Mr Forster to discuss their application.
* Thursday 14th Oct. Students and their parents/carers informed if they have a place on the visit or not.
* Meeting at Lunchtime on Friday 15th October for all students.
* Thursday 21st October. Students and parents/carers confirm that they want to take up the place, by paying the non-refundable deposit payment of £125 (40 for Pupil Premium Eligible students) by parent pay
* Wednesday 3rd November: After school meeting for parents, carers and students.

Support will be given by form tutors and the SEN team if students need help with their application.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me,

Oliver Forster

Vice Principal