



ABINGDON

From Co-ordinator, Abingdon Science Partnership: Jeremy Thomas

20 May 2016

Dear Parents

Cosmonaut Space and Leadership Experience Trip February 2017

Abingdon School and St Helen's School are pleased to offer pupils in next year's fourth year and upwards a seven day tour to Star City, Russia during the February half term break. The tour will be run by ISSET (the International Space Schools Educational Trust) who recently arranged the visit to Abingdon by ex-NASA astronaut, Dr. Michael Foale CBE. Dr. Foale will also accompany the pupils on the tour, giving a unique, personal insight into human space exploration.

The ISSET tour programme includes exclusive access to the world's best spaceflight training facilities, where Russia, NASA and the European Space Agency all train their astronauts. Pupils will meet cosmonauts and astronauts as well as engineers and others working in the space programme. They will spend several days on site living and working in Star City as well as having an opportunity to visit Moscow at the start and end of the tour.

The visit will take place within February half term, Saturday 11 – Sunday 19 February 2017, with exact dates decided once deposits have been paid and flight bookings confirmed. The estimated cost per student is £2,100, however until we have exact numbers and are able to make firm bookings this cost is subject to change. The agreed cost will be inclusive of all entrance fees, leaders, cosmonaut training instructors, all transport, airfares, meals, accommodation and travel insurance. Visa costs are not included and students will need to obtain these several months in advance of the trip. Visa prices vary according to the applicants' nationality. We are hoping to make arrangements for a Russian consular official to visit Abingdon to process visa applications for the whole party. However if this is not possible, or students are not able to make this appointment or fail to provide the full information required, students will be responsible for their own visa application

Accommodation in Moscow will be in the Cosmos Hotel, where activities may include:

- A VIP tour of the Buran Space Shuttle,
- A guided tour of Moscow's iconic attractions such as Red Square, The Kremlin and The Lenin Mausoleum,
- Shopping at the GUM (a former palace with shops underground).

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Participants will then travel to Star City, south of Moscow, for four days of hands on activities such as flight simulator training, space suit trials and a wilderness survival exercise with military instructors. The final day's activities will depend on flight times, but will probably allow for some more time in Moscow visiting museums or on a tour of the city.

If your son is definitely interested in this opportunity then please can you e-mail me with his full name, his tutor and his house as well as confirming your own contact details. I will then be able to send you fuller details, with a draft itinerary and other important information. An initial non refundable deposit (providing there is sufficient interest for the trip to proceed) of £750 will be necessary to secure a place on the trip and to allow initial arrangements, such as flights and accommodation, to be made. This must be paid by cheque, made payable to Abingdon School, by Friday 10 June. The remaining balance, estimated to be £1,350, will be charged to your School bill in two equal instalments of £675 on the July 2016 bill (payable September 2016) and December 16 bill (payable January 17).

Please note that by completing the consent form and providing the initial deposit you are committing to the total cost of this trip. The non refundable deposit secures your son's place, but thereafter the School will proceed to make bookings and reservations to procure the best possible deals. The payment arrangements offered are a means of spreading the cost rather than a reflection of when liabilities are incurred.

I look forward to hearing from you if your son wishes to participate in this unique and exciting trip.

Yours sincerely

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