



From Head of Philosophy and Theology: Thomas Eames-Jones

26 November 2021

Dear parents and guardians,

### **Philosophy and Theology trip to Istanbul 15 -18 October 2022**

This trip is open to those currently studying RS or Philosophy at GCSE or A Level and those in the third or fifth year who are planning on continuing P&T at GCSE or A Level. I am delighted to be in the position to offer your child the chance to join us on our trip to Istanbul in the first week of October half term next year.

The modern metropolis of Istanbul straddles the Bosphorus and is where east meets west, where Europe meets Asia. Istanbul was formerly the Ottoman capital of Constantinople (after the Emperor) and before the Byzantium of antiquity. Constantinople was a key city on the route which took the early Crusaders to Nicaea and Antioch before reaching Jerusalem. The Sack of Constantinople in 1204 during the Fourth Crusade is considered one of the most important events in world history and has shaped the religious and philosophical outlook of the city ever since.

From a P&T perspective the city is a treasure trove. Our trip will include all the important sights including The Hagia Sophia. This was built as a Cathedral in the sixth century by Byzantine Emperor Justinian I and converted into a Mosque when Constantinople fell to the Ottomans and is one of the wonders of the world. In addition to this we will visit ancient churches museums, mosques and places of interest as outlined below:

Day One: Fly to Istanbul

Day Two: Visit the Hagia Sophia, Blue Mosque, Basilica Cistern and Chora Church

Day Three: Tour the Istanbul Archaeological museum followed by churches and synagogues that date back to the Byzantine era, followed by a Bosphorus river cruise.

Day Four: Visit the Topkapi palace, grand bazaar and then fly home.

Students will gain an appreciation of all three abrahamic faiths whilst on this trip and it will aid them in their understanding of how the religions evolved, interacted with each other and how religions are practiced in the modern world.

The tour is being run by KiplingTours ([www.kiplingtours.com](http://www.kiplingtours.com)). We intend to reserve Turkish Airlines flights from London Heathrow to Istanbul airport, leaving in the morning of Saturday 15 October, and returning late evening on Tuesday 18 October. The provisional cost of the tour which includes all travel, accommodation, entry fees and meals is approximately £800 based on 32 students and 4

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staff. This may obviously be lower or higher depending on final numbers. I'm sure you will understand that the total price for the trip cannot be confirmed until I am able to provide a final passenger list to our tour operator.

The price does not include any passport or visa costs. UK passport holders amongst others are not required to get a visa for entry to Turkey but passports must have 6 months validity. For more information and for those students who do not hold a UK passport please visit <https://www.evisa.gov.tr/en/apply/> to check if you need an e-visa or not.

Whilst entry requirements are subject to change, at time of writing students will need to *either* show a negative PCR test within 72 hours of departure, a negative lateral flow test within 48 hours of departure *or* a full course of Covid vaccinations completed at least 14 days prior to arrival. The trip does not cover the cost of any test required.

The indicative costs will be charged as follows

Lent 2022 bill: £400 initial deposit payment

Summer 2022 bill: £400 remaining balance

Places will be allocated strictly on a first-come first-served basis. A prompt reply is essential, both to secure a place on the trip and to confirm the airline bookings. If your child would like to participate in this trip, please fill out the expression of interest, which can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

Please note that by completing the consent form (providing the trip proceeds, this will be sent in the New Year) you are committing to the total cost of this trip. 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. In the event that the trip has to be cancelled and the School is not able to recover costs from either insurers or other third parties, the School will unfortunately not be able to refund the cost of the trip.

The tour operator has indicated we are eligible for a full refund if the trip has to be cancelled within two weeks of departure due to COVID restrictions such as the following:

- FCDO advise against travel to Turkey
- Turkey is on the amber or red travel list
- Quarantine is required upon arriving in Turkey
- Local or national lockdown restrictions preventing our group's departure
- Local restrictions in Istanbul or the region impacting on the primary purpose of our tour
- Individual students catch Covid prior to travel and therefore cannot come on the trip

The trip is fully insured through Endsleigh, which includes medical cover for COVID whilst abroad.

Once I have final confirmation of numbers I will write again with final confirmation of cost. Should you wish to contact me for further information please email [Thomas.Eames-Jones@abingdon.org.uk](mailto:Thomas.Eames-Jones@abingdon.org.uk)

Yours sincerely



Thomas Eames-Jones