

Dear Parent/Guardian and Student

As you may already be aware, George Stephenson High School's ninth annual Ski Trip was undertaken during the February half term this year and was an enormous success. A total of 90 students and 13 staff had a fabulous time, and watching the participants develop not just as skiers and but also as young people over the course of the week was fantastic. Interest in the future trips is now extremely high, with many new skiers and old hands making enquiries. This year, however, we are excited to announce that we have made bookings for both Austria in 2020 and for the first time ever, the USA in 2021.

Our Austria 2020 booking is for the Salzburg Sportweld ski area, staying at the Sportheim on the outskirts of the slopes (about a ten minute journey) during the February half term in 2020, departing on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> February and returning on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2020, at a cost of **£916**. Please note that this quotation is to travel **by coach**. We have made the decision to stay with coach travel as it allows access to a much better quality resort, whilst keeping the cost as accessible as possible (flying to the same quality of resort as Amadé at half term would place the trip at approximately £1300-£1350).

For 2021, we have decided that we will offer our students something a little bit special: 4 days skiing in New Hampshire followed by 2 days in New York, departing on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> February and returning on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021. This is a chance to be involved in a very special trip that we see as being something we are unlikely to repeat and certainly not something we will do again during your child's time at the school. We will be skiing in the Waterville and Cannon ski areas in New Hampshire, staying at the Valley Inn with breakfast and dinner provided (students will be able to buy their own lunches on the slopes). The party will then transfer to New York for Friday afternoon and spend Friday and Saturday in New York City, as well as much of the following day before our Sunday evening departure. Accommodation within the city will be in Central Manhattan, in the Time Square area. We will return to Heathrow early Monday morning (UK time) before travelling back up to home. The tour price package is **£1599**. As a USA trip is more expensive than our usual European destinations, we feel it will be helpful to parents and guardians to have extra notice in order to help you save for the trip and so we are letting you know of our plans now. We will also therefore be offering two booking options this year.

Option 1: £100 deposit for Austria 2020. For full payment schedule, please see table below:

Deposit 1	£100	Thursday 2 <sup>nd</sup> May 2019
Deposit 2	£120	Friday 7 <sup>th</sup> June 2019
Instalment	£140	Monday 15 <sup>th</sup> July 2019
Instalment	£140	Thursday 15 <sup>th</sup> August 2019
Instalment	£140	Sunday 15 <sup>th</sup> September 2019
Instalment	£140	Tuesday 15 <sup>th</sup> October 2019
Final Payment	£136	Friday 15 <sup>th</sup> November 2019

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**Headteacher:** Ian D Wilkinson BA (Hons) MEd  
**Deputy Headteacher:** Peter Douthwaite BSc (Hons)  
**Deputy Headteacher:** Kathryn Williams BA (Hons)

Option 2: We are offering a chance to secure an early place on the 2021 USA trip by paying a first phase joint deposit of £150 for Austria 2020 and USA 2021. As the full balance of the USA trip will not be due until November 2020, this will allow students to access both trips for approximately £130 per month. Many students elect to come on consecutive trips, and we believe that this is the fairest way of making this as manageable as possible. For full payment schedule, please see table below:

Deposit 1	£150	Thursday 2 <sup>nd</sup> May 2019
Deposit 2	£150	Friday 7 <sup>th</sup> June 2019
Instalment	£130	Monday 15 <sup>th</sup> July 2019
Instalment	£130	Thursday 15 <sup>th</sup> August 2019
Instalment	£130	Sunday 15 <sup>th</sup> September 2019
Instalment	£130	Tuesday 15 <sup>th</sup> October 2019
Instalment	£130	Friday 15 <sup>th</sup> November 2019
Instalment	£130	Sunday 15 <sup>th</sup> December 2019
Instalment	£130	Wednesday 15 <sup>th</sup> January 2020
Instalment	£130	Saturday 15 <sup>th</sup> February 2020
Instalment	£130	Sunday 15 <sup>th</sup> March 2020
Instalment	£130	Wednesday 15 <sup>th</sup> April 2020
Instalment	£130	Friday 15 <sup>th</sup> May 2020
Instalment	£130	Monday 15 <sup>th</sup> June 2020
Instalment	£130	Wednesday 15 <sup>th</sup> July 2020
Instalment	£130	Saturday 15 <sup>th</sup> August 2020
Instalment	£130	Tuesday 15 <sup>th</sup> September 2020
Instalment	£130	Thursday 15 <sup>th</sup> October 2020
Final Payment	£135	Friday 15 <sup>th</sup> November 2020

ParentMail will be set up as instalments which will be due on the 15<sup>th</sup> of every month. If you are unable to make any of the instalments by the due date or wish to discuss larger instalments please contact Mrs McNally, Finance Manager on 0191 2165160.

As the USA trip involves flights and transfers, our numbers are less flexible than in European years. Once we have collected 40 deposits for 2021, students will be placed on a waiting list and their place will not be guaranteed until we reach 60 places. We would therefore recommend that you choose Option 2 should you be intending to attend both trips in order to avoid missing out.

If any USA 2021 places are still available after this first phase of places, then a second phase will be made available in November 2019, after the due date of the final balance of the Austria trip has passed, when the trip will also be on sale to our new intake of students. Any remaining spaces will then be made available in a third phase in March 2020, when we return from Austria.

Please note that second and third phase deposits will only be possible if the trip is not already full.

Students who are currently in Key Stage 4 but who plan to stay with us for Key Stage 5 are, of course, more than welcome to pay their deposits now. Should their plans change, then we can review their booking and deposit in September 2020.

Both trips are suitable for skiers of all abilities, whether you have never skied before or whether you want to get back on the slopes again after this year's trip. Our beginners this year made amazing progress, and you will too if you are new to the sport. We would like to begin preparations as soon as possible to give parents and guardians ample time to save for the trip. Whilst this is obviously a significant sum, arranging the booking this early will allow payments to be spread from March to November. I would also stress that the package includes five hours of ski instruction per day rather than the 4 normally offered, meaning that the students get as much skiing in as possible. I should also note that very little spending money will be required, as the accommodation is full board. Please note that all spending money should be submitted to staff before departure as we will be running a "student bank".

This is an opportunity to get involved in something that will be remembered for a lifetime.

Also included in this price are the following:

- Fully comprehensive travel insurance including medical, travel delay, personal liability and 24hr emergency service
- Ski breakage guarantee insurance
- All local taxes
- Resort representative service
- Resort lift pass for 5 days (4 in USA)
- Ski lessons - 5 hours per day (total of 25 hours instruction)
- Hire of skis, boots and poles for 5 days (4 in USA)

We are keen to arrange definite party numbers as quickly as possible in order to make firm bookings and to allow parents to spread the cost of the trips over as long a period as possible. A **non-refundable** deposit is required by the company to proceed with the booking and needs to be paid by **Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2019**. Deposits after this date may be accepted, but will be subject to availability. Further payments can then be made on a monthly basis, thus spreading out the costs. Alternative payment schedules are available upon request. However, in previous years monthly instalments have been the most effective way of organising payment. Please note that we reserve the right to alter our booking should our party number necessitate such a change. All deposits are non-refundable, with the exception of cancellation due to medical issues. I must also inform you that the payment deadlines overleaf will be rigidly enforced this year due to problems with late cancellations in recent years. In the event that a **second deposit** is not received by **Friday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2019**, the place will be cancelled and no refund given. This is the policy of the company with which we book, and to whom your payments are ultimately made. As a school we cannot make payments on behalf of others.

Please find a reply slip overleaf to accompany payment of the first deposit, which must be made by Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2019, and returned to the Main Office. We no longer accept payment by cash or cheque. Payment for school trips must be made via the ParentMail+Pay system (cards accepted are Visa, Mastercard or Maestro). Parents can log into their ParentMail account ([pmx.parentmail.co.uk](http://pmx.parentmail.co.uk)) and make a payment online. Parental Consent can also be given online avoiding the need for a reply slip to be returned. If you need any help with this please contact us on 0191 2161115 or by email, [parentmail@gshs.org.uk](mailto:parentmail@gshs.org.uk).

Obviously, the sooner payment is made, the sooner your place is guaranteed, but we have set this date so that parents/guardians have time to organise their funds. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require further details.

This is a great opportunity to learn how to ski, or to improve your existing skills, working in small groups with professional ski instructors (who privately often charge in excess of £100 per hour). The past nine years have been fantastic, and we are working hard to ensure that our tenth and eleventh trips are bigger and better than ever before.

Yours sincerely



MR D.JARVIE  
Ski Party Leader



**George Stephenson**  
High School

**PLEASE RETURN TO THE MAIN OFFICE NO LATER THAN THURSDAY 2<sup>nd</sup> MAY 2019**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Tutor Group: \_\_\_\_\_

- I would like to confirm my child's place on the 2020 ski trip / 2020 and 2021 ski trips (delete as appropriate).
- I have made my deposit payment of £100/£150 (delete as appropriate) via the ParentMail+Pay system.
- I understand that in the event of my cancellation, this deposit and any future deposits are non-refundable. I realise that if I wish to cancel, I must do so **in writing** to the Finance Office. I accept that failure to meet subsequent payment dates may result in cancellation, with no refund given.

Parental Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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