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To

Date 25<sup>th</sup> January 2010your ref  
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6557

please ask for Bob Saunders

Dear Colleagues,

**Re: Oaklands Outdoor Education Centre**

The Centre is writing to all users in light of recent adjustments to budgets. I am pleased to inform you that following the Council's recent consultation process – 'Wirral's Future – be part of it' the consensus was very favourable with evidence of a real desire to maintain Oaklands in order to continue to provide high quality educational learning with a residential experience.

Following the 'Wirral's Future – be part of it' consultation with Wirral residents and stakeholders, councillors approved a recommendation to move towards the Centre becoming self financing within the next four years. To move the centre towards this goal the annual price increase was agreed last week by the Oaklands Management Committee. The increase will take effect from September 2011 and attached are the new figures for this period. Further increases will be necessary in April and September 2012 and details of all charges will be posted on the Centre's web site in the near future.

For the last two years a 'Narrowing the Gap' grant has been awarded to finance subsidised places, regrettably due to government cuts, this grant is no longer available. Therefore subsidised places for children from low income families will no longer be available from April 2011.

For schools which have relied on the Remission Grant to support pupil's visits, the Centre urges you to consider using some of the new 'Pupil Premium' to fund this once in a lifetime experience. As you know the £430 Pupil Premium for every child who is entitled to free school meals will be given directly to schools from April 2011 and is aimed at reducing the attainment gap.

The Centre realises the demands which will be placed on schools regarding the use of the Pupil Premium will be used but the quote below hopefully justifies the use of some of this funding to subsidise outdoor and adventurous residential experiences for your pupils.

*'When planned and implemented well, learning outside the classroom contributes significantly to raising standards and improving pupils' personal, social and emotional development' Ofsted.*

Despite the price increases the Centre will continue to offer excellent value for money allowing pupils to access bespoke courses with low pupil/instructor ratios, led by highly qualified and skilled staff taking place in the beautiful and challenging area of the Snowdonia National Park. The Centre can also provide advice and guidance on how to make the best use of the experience both prior to a visit and on return to school.

The Centre is now taking bookings for 2012 and will be taking bookings for 2013 from December. Prices will remain extremely competitive. As always Oaklands values your support and sincerely hopes that the Centre can continue to work with you to provide a quality educational programme with memorable experiences for all your students.

Yours sincerely

pp David Armstrong  
Interim Director of Children's Services