



Diocese of Middlesbrough



Fides Caritas Unitas

ALL SAINTS RC SCHOOL

Diocese of Middlesbrough
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Our Ref: SSA/JSA

March 2022

Vietnam 2023

Dear Parents and Guardians

All Saints is pleased to offer students in Years 7, 8 and 9 an exciting opportunity to travel to Vietnam in July 2023.

We are keen to create some life-long memories for our students. The trip includes exploring urban, rural, island and river life through Hanoi, Ha Long Bay, Mekong Bay and Ho Chi Min. Students will have the opportunity to visit villages, go trekking, bay cruises, open cave swimming, night fishing, waking up (early!) on-board our own overnight cruise boat to try some Tai Chi, motor boating through the canals, paddle boating through even narrower canals, visiting islands, the Cu Chi tunnels and of course practice their bartering skills in the markets. Throughout our trip there are plenty of opportunities to experience first-hand the people, history and culture of Vietnam (a full itinerary is provided to accompany this letter).

I have led trips previously to Morocco, China, India, Mexico, America and Kenya. Protection is provided by ABTA, ATOL and IATA and there will be 24 hour emergency cover whilst on tour. Travelbound has an excellent reputation and offers the highest level of financial protection. Details of their accreditation and certifications can be found [here](#) and copies of the insurance can be found [here](#).

Students are covered by the comprehensive insurance policy as soon as deposits are processed by Travelbound. Students are fully covered from that point and throughout the trip. Insurance includes, but is not limited, to the following:

- Full refund if Covid-19 prevents a student from travelling before the departure date.
- Full refund if the trip is cancelled because of Covid-19.
- Costs of any medical requirements and accommodation during the trip if a student test positive for Covid-19.
- Return travel and accommodation for one parent trip if a student test positive for Covid-19.



Compassion



Truth



Respect



Forgiveness



Justice



Service



Gentleness



Humility



Stewardship

All students in Years 7, 8 and 9 are eligible to accompany the trip. The nature of the trip will be of interest to students for a number of reasons including those with a sense of adventure.

Fundraising is part of the process to develop a sense of leadership, unity and ownership of their experience (fundraising guidance will be provided). This will increase inclusivity by reducing the financial burden. In our experience, students that fully engage with the fundraising process have successfully achieved their target.

The intended departure date is Monday 17 July 2023, subject to flight availability. The duration of the trip is 8 days/7 nights (2 nights on overnight flights). The itinerary is purposely full so students need to be ready to be busy to make the very most of the trip. Student behaviour is of paramount importance. Student behaviour will be a determining factor if a student is eligible to travel. As a school, we need to have confidence that all the students that travel do not undermine the experience of others.

What is included:

Full Board
English speaking guide
Entrance fees

What is not included:

Visa stamping fee at airport (25US\$)
Discretionary tips
Additional drinks with meals
Personal expenses

Please note:

1. All students will require up-to-date travel documents (travel visa* and passports, etc). This will be the responsibility of each student and their family.
2. Arrangement and payment of the travel visa* and stamping fee will be the responsibility of each student and their family.
3. Families will need to arrange their own medical arrangements associated with the trip. Medical guidance will be provided by GPs.
4. The current requirement is that students are double vaccinated. Travel requirements are constantly changing so families will need to be flexible.

*UK Nationals are currently exempt from paying visa charges. This can be subject to change.

How to secure a place:

Places will **NOT** be secured on a first come, first served basis. This is an important decision that needs to be made so take time to consider your decision before paying a non-refundable deposit.

Phase 1: If the trip is over-subscribed, the following process will be followed:

Consult with the travel company to assess if the number of students can be accommodated.

Phase 2: If this is not possible:

Priority will be given to the older students.

This trip, or one to an equivalent destination, will be arranged again for younger students who were not able to travel to Vietnam.

The choice will remain with parents and guardians if they want their child to travel to Vietnam or an equivalent destination in the future.

Registering now for a future trip is not an option.

Students have been informed about this opportunity during Year Group Assemblies. A Parent Information Meeting will be held on Monday 4 April at 6:00pm in the Lower Site Hall. Attendance at the Parent Information Meeting is not a prerequisite for a place on the trip, nor does it commit families in any way.

The cost of the trip is £1,725.00 Deposits can be paid via ParentPay once your place has been confirmed. The payment process will begin with a non-returnable deposit of £325.00. Subsequent payments will be paid as below in instalments via ParentPay.

The process:

Parents express a commitment to pay a deposit via a Google link [here](#) by Monday 25 April.

Arrangements will be coordinated and secured using the process and criteria outlined.

- Instalment 1 (Deposit) £325 by Monday 2 May 2022
- Instalment 2 £200 (£525) by Monday 6 June 2022
- Instalment 3 £200 (£725) by Monday 18 July 2022
- Instalment 4 £200 (£925) by Monday 12 September 2022
- Instalment 5 £200 (£1125) by Monday 14 November 2022
- Instalment 6 £200 (£1325) by Monday 9 January 2023
- Instalment 7 £200 (£1525) by Monday 6 March 2023
- Instalment 8 £200 (£1725) by Monday 17 April 2023

Any surplus will be refunded to the ParentPay account holder.

I hope that you are able to join us on this adventure and create some life-long memories.

Yours sincerely



Mr Sandwell
ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER

ITINERARY SUMMARY:

Day 1: LONDON DEPARTURE

Coach transfer from school to the London airport for your overnight flight to Vietnam.

Day 2: HA NOI ARRIVAL AND 3 HOUR TOUR OF HANOI

Arrival at Hanoi airport, welcomed by our guide and driver then transfer to hotel. Hanoi or "River-bound City" as its name literally means is Vietnam's capital with a thousand-year-old history dating back to 1010. The city's fascinating beauty which is characterised by unique cultural relics, ancient streets of antique houses, elegant French colonial buildings, tree-lined boulevards and romantic lakes has made it one of the most charming cities of Asia. Transfer to our hotel. Check in and have breakfast. Enjoy some time to rest after our long flight.

In the afternoon, enjoy a 3 hours to 3.5 hours excursion tour. We will go to the West Lake (the biggest lake of Hanoi), Tran Quoc pagoda, John McCain statue, Hoa Lo prison, Long Bien bridge, and the Temple of Literature, known as the first university of Vietnam built in 1070 by the Ly Dynasty to honour Confucius, sages and outstanding Vietnamese scholars.

Overnight at hotel in Hanoi

Day 3: HALF DAY AT DUONG VILLAGE AND HALF DAY HA NOI CITY TOUR

Morning's activities: Duong Lam village and lunch at village.

We leave Hanoi to visit Duong Lam village, a purely agricultural village of the Northern Red. Visit Mong Phu temple in Mong Phu hamlet. We leave Duong Lam village - one of the oldest villages in Vietnam.

Some main activities at the Duong Lam village:

Visiting the ancient houses is a great chance to explore architecture of a typical Vietnamese traditional houses while wandering along its narrow alleyways.

Duong Lam Ancient Village has retained the basic characteristics of Vietnamese ancient villages with banyan tree, well and communal house's court.

Walking around the village to chat with locals to learn more about their local lifestyle as well as gain an insight into Vietnamese countryside.

Visiting King Ngo Quyen temple and King Phung Hung temple, Mia pagoda within this Duong Lam tour.

Afternoon's activities: Half day city tour

Ho Chi Minh Complex included outside Ho Chi Minh mausoleum, outside of Ba Dinh square, inside One pillar of pagoda, inside Ho Chi Minh house. At the complex, visit the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum, where the nation's founder's body is preserved, the colonial Presidential Palace, originally the French Governor Office and a fine example of French architecture in Hanoi, and the rural style Ho Chi Minh's house on stilts where Ho Chi Minh lived and worked. Stop by one of Hanoi's icons, the One Pillar Pagoda, built in the 11th Century in dedication to Buddha of Compassion and reminiscent of a lotus blossom rising from a pond.

Traditional Vietnamese water puppet show at Thang Long Opera Theatre.

Overnight at hotel in Hanoi

DAY 4: HA NOI - HA LONG OVER NIGHT ON BOAT

Morning pickup at 8:00am from our hotel for transfer to Ha Long Bay, which is about 160 km or 3.5-hour drive away. On the way, we will see some rural areas of the Red River Delta with plenty of chances to take photos of Vietnamese farmers working in paddy fields. Stop half way to visit a handicraft workshop of fine clothes and embroidered paintings. Arrive in Ha Long City at 11:30am and check in aboard the booked junk right after the welcome drink is served. Start cruising while having lunch on board and enjoy the bay view.

Ha Long Bay meaning Descending Dragon Bay in Vietnamese as legend has it that it was where a holly dragon landed down from sky. The bay, famous as one of the world's wonders and heritage sites whose formation dates back 500 million years, consists of around 2,000 karst islands and islets scattered over an area of 1,553 km². The bay cruise will continue with up close sighting of Dinh Huong Island, Ga Choi Island, Dog Island, Sail Island, a visit to Sung Sot Cave and swimming stop at Titov Beach. Relax to enjoy the bay view at sunset, have dinner after, go fishing at 9:00pm and spend a night on board.

Overnight on boat

DAY 5: HA LONG - HA NOI TO HO CHI MINH

Wake up at 6:30am and refresh your body and mind with a Tai Chi exercise on the sundeck. Tai Chi is an ancient internal martial art often practiced in soft and gracefully slow moves to enhance internal harmony and vitality. Have tea and coffee on-board before proceeding to Titov Islet or Soi Sim Island to trek and swim. Check out at 9:30am, have a buffet brunch while cruising back to shore. Disembark at 11:00am to transfer to Hanoi. Free at leisure before your transfer to airport for flight.

Arrive at Tan Son Nhat International Airport, welcome by our guide and transfer to your hotel. Ho Chi Minh City formerly named Saigon is the largest city and economic centre of Vietnam always bustling with activities of modern life. It is where businesses converge, and shoppers indulge themselves into unlimited choices. However, the city also carries with it a rich historical legacy in contrast with its dazzling glamour.

Overnight at hotel in Ho Chi Minh

DAY 6: FULL DAY MEKONG DELTA - FISH PROCESSING COMPANY IN BEN TRE

Today, we will be picked up and travel past miles of flat rice fields, along a bustling road to the Mekong Delta, the world's largest delta and Vietnam's largest rice bowl. Visit a rice plantation.

On arrival in My Tho City, board a motorboat and navigate through intricate canals while observing the local daily life up close as well as the landscape of waterways and lush islands. Land on Thoi Son Island where you can listen to Southern traditional music performed by native artists.

Next, we will change to a paddle boat to cruise through the narrow canals and visit households with traditional occupations of home-based coconut candy and rice-wine making. Continue travel by motorised boat to another island to visit a bee farm and taste tea with fresh honey from the beehives and enjoy fresh fruits. Interact with local residents to understand about river life. Their economy is based mostly on tourism, mangoes, bananas and citrus fruit.

On the return to My Tho, stop to visit the Vinh Trang Pagoda, a prominent local Buddhist structure built in 1850 with a unique architectural mixture of Vietnamese, Roman, Chinese and Cambodian styles characterised by a highly ornate façade. Enjoy lunch at a local Vietnamese restaurant. Visit a floating fish processing company before transfer back to Saigon.

Overnight hotel in Ho Chi Min

DAY 7: FULL DAY CITY TOUR & CU CHI TUNNELS THEN DEPARTURE

Morning meet our guide at your hotel and transfer about 75 km North-west of downtown Ho Chi Minh City to visit the famous Cu Chi Tunnels. The driving time is approximately 2 hours.

Arrive in Cu Chi, we explore the tunnels which were once a major underground hideout and resistance base of Viet Cong forces during the two wars against the French and the Americans. The tunnels, entirely hand-dug, formed a highly intricate network of interlinked multilevel passageways at times stretched as far as the Cambodian border and totalling over 120 km in length. Its complexity was beyond imagination, containing meeting rooms, kitchens, wells, clinics, schools, depots, trenches and emergency exits all aimed for guerrilla warfare. The tunnels were deep and strong enough to withstand destructive bombings and self-contained enough to outlast prolonged sieges. Afterwards, return to Saigon for lunch.

Afternoon, tour in the city with the Reunification Palace, which was formerly the South Vietnam President's residence and symbol of the Southern Administration's reign until the end of April 1975. Next, stop at Saigon Notre-Dame Basilica, a neo-Roman cathedral built over 130 years ago by the colonial French with materials entirely imported from Marseilles. Call in Sai Gon Post Office, a fine colonial building which was designed and built in the early 20th Century by the famous French architect Gustave Eiffel.

Move on to Cho Lon or the city's China Town where you will stop off at the Thien Hau temple. The Thien Hau temple was built in the early 19th Century dedicated to Thien Hau, the goddess of seafarers.

Late afternoon - Free at leisure for the group at Ben Thanh market, return to the hotel for a shower and change before our evening meal.

Transfer airport for your departure flight

Day 8: ARRIVE UK

Arrive UK. Our coach will meet us at the airport and transfer you back to school.