

Urmston Grammar School

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January 2025

Dear Parents/Carers,

RE: History Department Trip to WWI Battlefields - France and Belgium

Each year in November the history department at UGS organises a field trip to the First World War battlefields in northern France and Belgium. The trip is timed to coincide with teaching of the First World War in year 9. The trip is also helpful for those who are intending to study GCSE history since one of the units at GCSE covers medicine and treatment in the trenches. This year's trip will run from **Wednesday November 19th to Saturday November 22nd**. The aim of the trip is to visit the trenches, memorials, cemeteries and museums of the area in order for the students to better comprehend the effects of the war on Britain and on the people of this part of Manchester. Students find that the field trip brings the First World War 'to life'. We travel down to France on the Wednesday and travel back from Belgium on the Saturday – departure time is 5.30am. That gives us two whole days to explore the battlefield sites. We visit the Somme area for a day before driving into Belgium to visit the battlefield sites around Ypres. We travel to the continent by coach and ferry and we stay for three nights at two hostels, one in Albert and one in Ypres, where we receive full-board accommodation. It is important to note that, whilst students find the trip fascinating and enjoyable, it is an extracurricular trip and not vital for success in history in year 9 or in year 10. We would like to prioritise students who enjoy history and who are **highly likely** taking history at GCSE. Students will be expected to complete a coursework booklet as we tour the battlefield sites and museums. The most engaged and hard-working students on the trip will lay the school's wreaths at the Menin Gate during the Last Post ceremony.

The cost of the trip is £359 (I do not yet have the ferry prices for 2025 so this may increase or decrease by a few pounds) and payment can be spread over the next 9 months. The final installment will be due just before October half term. There are enough spaces on the trip to take approximately half of the year group. Once we have the names of all of those interested in coming on the trip we will, if necessary, hold a draw, confirm places and ask for a non-returnable deposit of £80. Students who have shown an exceptional attitude in history lessons may be offered a place without entering the draw and this will be entirely at the discretion of their class teacher. Students whose behaviour and attitude in school in general has fallen well below expectations will be not offered a place on the trip. Please note that I have not discussed this trip with the students so please do discuss it with your son/daughter if you think it is something they would enjoy and if it is feasible for them to take part.

Can I ask that you request a place on the trip through parent pay – no payment will be requested – by the end of the day on Monday January 20th (3.30pm) so that we can then finalise the list of attendees and request payment of the deposit. I hope to be able to notify all parents of the outcome of the draw by the end of next week. Please do NOT apply for a place on the trip if your son/daughter has decided that they are definitely not taking GCSE history.

The trip will go live on parent pay on Wednesday January 15th at around 3.30pm

Urmston Grammar School - Headteacher: Mrs R S Wall
pride, participation, empathy

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If you have any questions regarding the trip please do not hesitate to contact me, but I will hold a parents' information evening at some point in the autumn term – date TBC.

Yours Sincerely,

Matthew McPartland
(Head of History)
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