

Thu 17/09/2026

Dear Colleagues,

New IRIS HR system – getting ready for October

Our new IRIS HR system will open to staff from Monday 5th October, initially allowing you to book and cancel annual leave and view your September payslip. Ahead of go-live, we will share practical guidance to help everyone get ready, including written guides and short videos. We will also offer optional Teams sessions both before and after go-live, giving you an opportunity to see the new system in action and ask any questions.

There is nothing you need to do in relation to the new system just yet – we will let you know what you need to do and when as we get closer to the go-live date. Your HR team will be here to support you every step of the way.

Annual leave booking and cancellation in MyView will close from Friday 18th September whilst we transfer annual leave information to the new system. If you need to arrange leave during this period, please agree this directly with your line manager and record it in the new system once it becomes available.

South Korean Delegation

Last week at PM we welcomed a delegation from the Korean Youth Work Agency, keen to find out about youth policy in the UK as they look to introduce a new regulatory framework. They enjoyed a tour of PM and its adventure facilities, were introduced to conkers as a national sport, cake and a quick overview of what can be a baffling set up in the UK, with its different nations and multiple providers. Some themes are universal and required little translation. The difficulty of different government departments not talking to each other and the high turnover of ministers got lots of knowing laughter. We are now looking at the possibility of funded exchange programmes.



Visitor Levy

The government's response to the consultation on the introduction of powers to allow mayoral and strategic authorities in England to introduce a visitor levy has been published. There is still no automatic exemption for school, youth or education visits so if introduced, we would need to make the case with each authority on a case by case basis. Exemptions are to be based on types of accommodation not type of visit or visitor, although there was an acknowledgement that certain types of accommodation tended to cater for school visits.

At the current time, our residential centres don't fall within these areas although Surrey is looking to become one. We might be able to draw a little comfort from Wales, where councils already have the option to consult and then bring in a visitor levy. So far Neath Port Talbot Council does not appear to be currently consulting on or introducing the visitor levy. Pembrokeshire's current administration has no intention of taking the option of a levy forwards and Conway will be discussing a proposal later this month to defer introducing the levy until there is more evidence and experience from elsewhere in Wales.

Political Work

We are expecting a number of key announcements in coming weeks including the budget, some more GCSE Subject content consultations and also Alan Milburn's recommendations into NEETs. We are already positioning our +Adventure offer and [outdoor learning as one of the solutions](#) with MPs and policy makers as there is already considerable interest in what Milburn will say.

Welcome to Field Studies Council

New starters this week:

Ian Millichamp has joined the team at Millport as Head Chef.

Raymart Kasilag has joined the team at Margam as Casual Hospitality & Catering Assistant.

Also this week:

Beth Martin has returned to Castle Head as Administrator.

Aaron Bailey has returned to Field Studies Council and joined the team at Blencathra as Tutor.

Greg Bowes is now the Regional Senior Tutor for the North region.

Leo Higgins is now a permanent member of the team at Blencathra as Seasonal Hospitality & Catering assistant.

Best regards

Mark