SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS

Note to schools: You will need to insert all the usual information about date, time, travel arrangements etc. into this proforma, but also insert specific visit details into the spaces provided and remove any elements you don’t need e.g. food requirements. It is recommended that you use this letter for all visits as part of RE, including local churches.

Dear Parents

The pupils in Year...... are currently studying ........... [name of religion / theme] in Religious Education as part of the locally Agreed Syllabus (the statutory document for RE in maintained schools in Lambeth). A visit to a local .............. [place of worship] is a fascinating opportunity for the pupils to get a real insight into a modern ............... [Christian / Muslim / Hindu / Jewish / Buddhist / Sikh] community and meet some of the lovely people who live and work there, including ................................. [names of hosts] who will be showing us round. We hope it will bring pupils’ learning to life and allow them to be curious about the faith and its practices.

Religious Education is an academic subject. It is taught as an understanding of different religions, from an unbiased perspective. It is – in our view – an essential part of the curriculum which is becoming more and more important as British society becomes more diverse. We feel strongly that pupils need a good understanding of different cultures, in order to learn respect for others and practise the values of acceptance, tolerance and unity. We would like to emphasise that as part of this visit, pupils will not be asked to participate in worship, but might watch any worship or prayer that is happening during the visit. This visit has been planned by your child’s teacher, who is leading the visit and working in partnership with ................................. [names of hosts] from the host community.

This visit will include:
[insert details]

For this visit, pupils will need to wear............................ [insert dress code]

For this visit, pupils will need to avoid bringing ...................... in their packed lunch or snack. These particular dress / food requirements are an outward token of respect for others’ beliefs and sensitivities, and do not signify participation in worship.

For this visit, your child will also need:
[insert details, especially referencing any ‘voluntary’ contribution and what it covers e.g. coach, donation to host community etc.]

As with any school visit, we will need parent helpers to ensure adequate pupil: adult ratios. Please speak to your child’s class teacher if you can help.

We are really looking forward to this visit, and have been working closely with .................. to plan an enriching and enjoyable experience. Do come and talk to us if you have any questions or concerns, or would like to attend with your child.

Yours sincerely