



The Learning Away schools have developed a series of themed resource packs to help other schools plan and deliver **Brilliant Residentials**.

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USING THE PLANNING TOOL FLOW CHART TO PLAN A RESIDENTIAL

Example: Key Stage 4 GCSE attainment camp

STEP 1 LEARNING PROBLEM OR OPPORTUNITY

A large secondary school aims to improve its students' future education and employment opportunities. The school aims to achieve this by ensuring that, at the end of KS4, all students have achieved their academic potential and have secured appropriate opportunities to continue to engage in learning.

Over several years, the school has identified groups of students within the wider Year 11 cohort who risk not achieving their full potential at GCSE. The school has observed that many of these young people do not have high enough expectations of themselves, and lack self-esteem and self-awareness.

A group of teachers see a residential as an opportunity to:

- improve these students' attendance at and behaviour in school
- support them to develop skills for learning and more positive attitudes to support themselves as learners.

STEP 2 LONG TERM AIM/S

The school's long-term aim for this residential programme is that the identified cohort of students will achieve higher than expected grades at GCSE.

STEP 3 OUTCOMES

Outcomes are the specific, medium-term changes/benefits you want to see that come about as a direct result of the residential/s for students, staff and the wider school. They support the achievement of your long-term aim.

For this residential programme, the school is aiming to achieve the following:

- By developing stronger, more supportive relationships with staff and other students, the teachers hope the young people will feel more able to take risks with their learning in school and beyond.
- By providing these students with different types of challenges in a supportive atmosphere, they will experience confidence and success, and understand the constructive importance of failure. Back in school, they will be able to persevere with learning that they find difficult as a result of experiencing and overcoming challenges on the residential.
- By planning subject-related activities linked to a real-world setting, they hope students will



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better understand their subjects and see them as relevant, therefore increasing their engagement with learning.

- Teachers will be encouraged to draw on the shared residential experience, using the increased trust and understanding they have built with their students to introduce new, more creative teaching methods.

The teachers aim to sustain and increase the impact of these outcomes by building on different elements of the residential over time. For example, to encourage improved attendance and behaviour after the residential, students' school timetables will be planned to maintain key relationships with staff that have been built on the residential. Students will also be given opportunities to share their experience with their peers and younger students.

STEP 4 INPUTS

Inputs are the aspects of the residential that you think will best enable the programme to achieve its hoped-for outcomes.

In this case, the school believes that working together in a less formal setting, the extended and informal time a residential experience provides, and sharing more domestic activities will be effective in breaking down existing patterns of behaviour between staff and students. To best support this change, they plan a five-day, four-night camping trip on the site of a residential centre – a senior member of staff has significant experience in this area and is confident about leading the camp. The residential has large wooded areas in addition to the campsite, as well as classrooms and space for adventure activities.

In order to allow the students to learn a number of their school subjects in this new environment, and to support a wider group of students and staff to develop better relationships, the school decides that teachers from across the curriculum will plan and lead the subject-related activities on the residential. To challenge the students further they also plan a number of team-building and adventure activities, and work with centre staff to relate these sessions to the subject-related activities. The group planning the trip also builds in free time around the camp to reinforce peer and student-adult relationships.

STEP 5 OUTPUTS

Outputs are quantifiable, short-term changes that are a direct result of your residential/s. They are the measurable things that your residential/s 'put out'.

Examples of outputs from this residential include:

- Teachers from eight subject areas across the curriculum plan and deliver subject-related lessons on the residential.
- Students complete five identified pieces of work during the week e.g. specific pieces of coursework, blocks of learning around particular concepts, preparing and delivering performances.
- Students complete four adventure/team-building activity challenges successfully.
- Students are fully engaged in learning during both subject and activity sessions.
- The camp is set up and struck smoothly through teamwork.



- All meals are prepared and served by students (with adult supervision); the camp is kept tidy and clean by students and adults alike.
- Students and staff spend a significant proportion of the informal time together e.g. in large-scale sports matches, or just sitting and talking.
- Relationships between students, and between students and staff, improve.

STEP 6a PLANNING – MAKING IT HAPPEN

In order to achieve its goal of helping all students to reach their potential, it is important that all students in the target group are able to attend the residential. The residential needs, therefore, to be lower cost in order to remove financial barriers. As well as keeping costs lower through camping, the school investigates opportunities for self-catering (including what staff training this might need). The school also realises it may need to support some students financially through Pupil Premium.

In order to allow time after the residential for school staff to monitor any changes in students' progress and attitudes to school, they plan the residential for the start of Year 10. The school staff also assume that an earlier residential will lead to greater student progress and achievement because it will allow the students more time back in school, making full use of their new skills and confidence, before their GCSEs.

STEP 6b PLANNING - SUSTAINING THE IMPACT

Staff are also aware that they will need to work to sustain the impact of the residential when they get back to school. They plan to do this by: moving some of the more vulnerable students on the residential into groups taught by participating teachers where relationships become strong; introducing more learning outside the classroom into their curriculum areas; putting up photos in their classrooms of students achieving on the residential to which they can refer; and planning further educational visits, both day and residential, where learning from this residential can be reinforced.

STEP 6c PLANNING – EVALUATION

In order to evaluate the impact of delivering parts of the GCSE curriculum through a residential, the staff group decides on a system of testing students in relevant areas before and after the residential to monitor progress. They will also track the residential group's attainment over a longer period in relation to a control group from the same year group who were unable to attend the residential.

Impact on engagement will be evaluated through collecting behaviour and attendance data for the residential group and comparing this to the same control group as for the attainment evaluation. Data will be collected for the term before the residential, the term immediately after the residential and the term after that for a longer-term view.

In order to evaluate the qualitative aspects of the residential, students will be asked to complete a survey before and after the residential. Staff also plan to carry out observations of selected students both on and after the residential to observe in-depth change and run focus groups with



two representative student groups.

Finally, the staff group will meet together to evaluate the residential from both a logistics and achievement point of view, and to discuss whether their assumptions about change were correct (see **Testing assumptions** below for more on this).

Testing assumptions

The teachers planning the trip know they have made a number of assumptions about how change happens when planning the residential (e.g. that time spent together during informal time positively contributes to changing the relationship between staff and students, and that improved relationships will enable teachers to plan more engaging lessons back in school).

To understand whether these were right, and whether and why the residential is effective in achieving the intended outcomes, the school plans to measure and compare students' academic progress, attendance and recorded behavioural incidents before the residential and throughout the remainder of KS4. They also plan to use group interviews and questionnaires to collect feedback from a range of students and staff, asking whether they think the trip made a difference to students' confidence and behaviour and – if so – which parts were more or less helpful. This information will help them decide whether to run the programme next year, and what changes to make.

A note about outputs and outcomes

Being specific about your outputs and outcomes means you can plan how you will carefully monitor them, and so be able to evaluate the extent to which the residential has achieved its aims. Learn more about why and how to evaluate your residential [here](#).

One way to develop strong, specific objectives is to use the **SMART** approach – making sure that the outcomes you hope your residential will achieve are **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant, and **T**ime-bound.

Next steps

The group of teachers planning the residential programme would then record their thinking on the planning template – see [here](#) and [here](#) for blank versions that can be used for handwritten (we recommend using A3 paper) or electronic planning.

