



Dear Parent/Guardian,

I would like to invite you to an informational session about a potential two-week expedition to Mexico in summer 2019 to help with biodiversity surveys run by Operation Wallacea. The presentation will be given on **03/10/2018** in the **sixth form Pod** at **6pm** and is open to **Year 12**, but any student that is interested in biology, ecology and conservation is welcome to attend.

For the first week, the students will be working in the Selva Maya, which is the largest undisturbed tract of forest outside of the Amazon. The area is filled with ancient Mayan temples, and is one of the world's most important habitats for jaguar, tapir and other large mammals. Students will be assisting with a biodiversity survey being run by international teams of university academics to collect data to monitor the efficiency of the sustainable use projects in the area. They will be based in a rainforest research camp, where they will be helping with forest structure surveys, bird point counts and mist netting, amphibian and reptile surveys as well as camera trapping for the large cat species and tapirs. In addition, they will be learning about neotropical forest ecology and Mayan culture in their spare time, and will have the opportunity to visit a Mayan pyramid.

For the second week the students will be based at Akumal where they have the chance to learn to dive to PADI Open Water level, or if they already dive or just want to snorkel then they would complete a Caribbean reef ecology course. All the students will get the chance to help with snorkel based counts of turtles on the sea grass beds at this site.

It is also possible to use the expedition to gain extra UCAS points by doing an EPQ or extended essay project, and the expedition covers key aspects of biology and geography syllabuses. In addition if they are applying for UK universities then they automatically qualify by completing the expedition for a University Award that can be included on their UCAS form.

The Opwall expedition costs can be significant, and as such Opwall can provide a meeting with one of their fundraising team. It would be our aim that if necessary, a large portion of the monies required could be fundraised. At the meeting specific dates and cost will be discussed and explained.

I look forward to seeing you on the evening.

Mrs T O'Neill
Head of Geography
Educational Visits Coordinator
D of E Manager