



# 7 Secrets of a Truly Brilliant Residential

A guide to planning and running a brilliant Residential, based on the latest research.

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**TeamCamp**  
Laugh • Learn • Lead

# 7 Secrets ...

of a Truly Brilliant Residential.

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# 7 Secrets ...

## One Truly Brilliant Residential!

In 2015, York Consulting completed their independent review of the results of Learning Away – a £2.3m charitable initiative lasting 5 years. Learning Away demonstrated the positive impact that high-quality residential learning can have, and generated a number of key learnings for schools.

Having built our new residential service on the shoulders of this (and other) research, we at TeamCamp wanted to share its key lessons – condensed into easily implemented bite-size chunks.

In the words of Learning Away, residential are a ‘multi-tool’ for achieving vital educational outcomes. They can have a huge impact on students of all ages and help to deliver whole school change. These tips will ensure that you and your school can realise the full potential that Residential have to offer.

# Curriculum in 3D

## SECRET #1

When residentials are integrated with the curriculum they have greater impact and provide many more learning opportunities.<sup>1</sup>

We all know the value of making the curriculum exciting to learn whenever possible. Nevertheless, by being largely confined to the classroom one could say most teaching is a bit two-dimensional. Residentials offer the perfect opportunity for you to bring a third dimension to the curriculum.

To do this effectively, you need to create firm links between the classroom and your residential. So on the one hand, activities at the residential reference learning from previous class lessons. On the other, output and activities from the residential are used and discussed as part of subsequent classroom based lessons.

For example, at TeamCamp residentials we integrate curriculum learning goals into many activities. Such as: a numeracy based element of a large team game, a creative task to write an in-game election campaign, and a pupil written learning diary. For each such example, we work with the school in advance to find, and reference, specific links to classroom activities past and future.

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<sup>1</sup> Ofsted report into Learning Outside the Classroom, 2008

# Turn Parents into Raving Fans

## SECRET #2

Any parent knows that letting your young ones out of your hands, particularly for the first time, can cause heart palpitations. It can also provide parents with a well-earned break; and if kids come home energised and inspired, then their parents are likely to be pretty chuffed too.

In short, parents need to be involved and enrolled in your residential plans. Moreover, by doing this the residential becomes an opportunity to turn your parents into raving fans of your plans and your school.

Call a meeting and invite them along. Offer this as a forum in which they can ask questions and chip in on what they would like to see their kids gain from the experience. You could take this one step further and offer them the chance to come along as volunteers.

Pitch the residential as an integral part of the term's work, as well as a way of broadening pupils' life experience. Upon return, ensure the parents are told as much detail about the week as possible. Send any pictures, videos, reviews and analysis out to them so they know what their children gained.

Finally, schools normally pass the costs of residentials onto pupils' parents. Therefore, it helps with winning parental enthusiasm if you have chosen a residential option that offers great value for money.

# Leave No Man Behind

## SECRET #3

The previous point leads neatly to our 3<sup>rd</sup> 'secret', which is the perhaps obvious but crucial point that your residential should be inclusive. It is always sad to hear stories of pupils being left behind. The single most important factor to ensuring that all pupils can attend, is cost.

It is now common for residentials at purpose-built activity centres to cost as much as a small family holiday. Most parents will at least find this irksome, while for some it is prohibitive. Many schools use Pupil Premium funds to help disadvantaged pupils attend. This merely increases the need for schools to maintain low costs.

Moreover, brilliant residentials need not be expensive. In particular, by employing a camping format schools can actually achieve **more** with **less**. They can create residentials that are not only low-cost, but also offer *greater* opportunities for pupil and teacher leadership and relationship building.

The only potential drawback is that such endeavours can be time consuming to arrange and there are lots of little things to get right. This of course is where TeamCamp's Residential service comes to the rescue!

# Teachers as Teammates

## SECRET #4

Going away with your pupils and spending an extended period of time in a new environment can really help to break down barriers. To make the most of this opportunity a Residential should give pupils and teachers the opportunity to work and play together in ways not normally possible in the classroom.

Teachers should not see Residential as little more than a 'jolly' to be had while the kids are kept busy with fun activities. Ensure they get to be team-mates to their pupils – it's pretty powerful for teachers and pupils to be truly on the same team for once!

At TeamCamp, our staff will run many activities, with Teachers and pupils often being part of the same teams. This is in addition to other sessions being led by teachers and even pupils from the school. A shared experience such as this builds relationships and becomes an empowering experience for all.

Finally, allow 'down time' during the trip for sharing and general relaxation. It doesn't have to be about learning and being active all the time. There should be slack in the system for reflection and celebration of activities and achievements, and for informal bonding and group time to take place.



# Teach 'Em How to Lose

## SECRET #5

As the mother of Jack Welch, legendary CEO of General Electric in the 80s and 90s, said to him as a child: "How can you expect to know how to win, if you don't even know how to lose?" Most realise the importance of resilience, and how some kids give up simply because they are afraid to lose, or afraid to care.

Residentials offer the opportunity for teachers and pupils to engage together in activities – and to win or lose together. As such they offer a special opportunity for teachers and leaders to 'model' how to lose.

When designing your programme ensure that you plan for games and activities that yield winners and losers. This may sound obvious but it's something that many underestimate the importance of. PE is often the only time that children get a chance to be in teams and experience competition, so use your residential as a scaffold for this form of character building.

Each TeamCamp Residential includes a week-long game that engages children in their teams throughout. Every day some teams appear to be on top whilst others appear to be losing. Real team spirit is cultivated by deciding to fight back from weakness, as well as celebrating successes together.



# Let Them Lead!

## SECRET #6

As teachers, we try to *avoid* losing control so the idea of pupil-led sessions can feel uncomfortable to say the least. Yet Residentials provide an opportunity to do just that and the benefits to pupils can be enormous<sup>2</sup>.

We're not suggesting that you gather the children and say "right, now you're in charge, here's a ball and a bat, go and do what you want". The appropriate amount of 'empowerment' should depend upon the age and maturity of the pupils concerned.

In the case of Secondary pupils, you may go so far as have them pre-prepare some activities as a pre-camp challenge. Meanwhile, you may give Primary pupils guidance to run an activity and then support them as they explain it to everyone else.

At TeamCamp Residentials, we tailor our programmes to the goals of each School. This can include making space for pupil-led activities. We also encourage younger pupils to lead small group activities with the support of staff and teachers.

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<sup>2</sup> Learning Away found that among Residentials that encouraged pupil leadership, the proportion of pupils that saw themselves as being a role model to others rose from 40% to 67%.

# Treasure Every Moment

## SECRET #7

A Residential trip is often a new experience for all involved. When you go on holiday to a new country for the first time what do you do? You take pictures, videos, and talk about it when you get home.

Taking photos and/or videos is a great way to celebrate and help keep memories alive. Moreover, a Residential is more than just a trip, it's also an investment and a learning opportunity. So celebrating and evidencing its outcomes is of particular importance.

At TeamCamp we ask all involved to complete surveys at the beginning and end of the Residential, and also 6 months *after* it has finished. This allows us to record otherwise intangible benefits including long term benefits to relationships and results.

A robust evaluation will help identify strengths and weaknesses in the residential experience, and how successful it was meeting objectives. Photos and other take-aways such as pupil diaries will help keep memories alive and provide juicy reference points for future pupil-teacher interactions in the classroom.

Now you're ready to organise a...

**Truly Brilliant** residential!

## WHAT NEXT?

If you are interested in speaking to TeamCamp about our Residential service, we would love to hear from you. In fact, we would love to hear from you anyway – we love helping Teachers!

**Contact Lindsey on [lindsey@teamcamp.co.uk](mailto:lindsey@teamcamp.co.uk) or 07760 669157**

We look forward to hearing from you and helping you revolutionise your school's residential learning.

Good luck!



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