

# FIRST STORY

Changing lives through writing

First Story  
Omnibus Business Centre  
39-41 North Road  
London, N7 9DP

[info@firststory.org.uk](mailto:info@firststory.org.uk)

January 2019

Dear parent/guardian,

Your child has been nominated to apply for the 2019 First Story Summer Residential in recognition of their talent and passion for creative writing. The residential will take place from **Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 4:30pm to Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> July 10am** at Arvon's writing retreat Lumb Bank, in West Yorkshire. We are delighted to be able to offer this residential course entirely free of charge via subsidy and through the support of our partner Arvon.

The Summer Residential brings together sixteen young writers from First Story schools across the UK for a week of creative writing. Throughout the week, students will be living and writing alongside their peers and participating in group creative writing workshops and one-to-one tutorials. On the final evening, students will have the opportunity to share their work with their fellow young writers at a special performance night.

This is an incredible and once in a lifetime opportunity for students to develop their writing. Students will have the chance to learn from two expert tutors, get personalised feedback on their work and find time and space to write in a beautiful location.

There will be two First Aid trained First Story staff members in attendance for the entire residential, who will be acting in loco parentis for all students during the week. All adults supporting during the residential are DBS checked. Transport will be arranged by First Story and the student group will be supervised at all times during the journey by two First Story staff members. Some travel via public transport will be required.

In addition, there will be staff at the residential site, all of whom have been DBS checked. Most students will have their own bedroom, and where students are asked to share, we will ensure boys and girls are accommodated separately. First Story staff will have separate rooms in the same building as the students.

There are sixteen places available for students and your child has been nominated by their school to apply for the opportunity. We are asking nominated students to submit a 300-word statement to First Story outlining why participating in the Summer Residential programme would benefit their creative writing, what being part of First Story has meant to them and why they would like to keep writing. Further details on how students can submit an application can be found on page three.

First Story will contact all applicants and their parents/guardians to let them know if they have been offered a place. If your child has been offered a place, you will receive an acceptance pack from First Story in mid-March with full details about the residential and a registration form which must be signed and returned in order to confirm a place.

The students we have not been able to offer a place to will be put on a waiting list in case an additional space becomes available.

Please read through all this information with your child. If you would like to confirm your child's nomination, the attached consent form on page five must be signed and returned along with a student statement of interest to your liaison teacher by **Monday 4<sup>th</sup> March**.

If you have any questions at all about the week, you're very welcome to contact me either by telephone (020 7481 7777) or by email ([scarlet.brearley@firststory.org.uk](mailto:scarlet.brearley@firststory.org.uk)).

With best wishes,

**Scarlet Brearley**  
Partnerships and Projects Officer

*Please keep this page for your own records*

## **First Story Residential - Student Information**

### ***What is the First Story Summer Residential?***

The residential brings together sixteen young writers from First Story schools across the UK for a week of creative writing. If you've finished the First Story programme and want to keep writing, the First Story Summer Residential is the perfect opportunity for you to develop your writing skills.

Throughout the week, you will be living and writing alongside your peers and participating in creative writing workshops and tutorials at Arvon's beautiful Lumb Bank site in West Yorkshire. On the final evening, you will have the opportunity to share your work with your fellow young writers at a special performance night.

This is an incredible and once in a lifetime opportunity to develop your writing, to learn from two expert tutors, get personalised feedback on your work and find time and space to write in a beautiful location.

### ***Student Testimonial***

Read this testimonial from Shakira, a First Story alumna who attended the summer residential to Tottleigh Barton in 2016.

"An experience with Arvon means discovery.

By the end of my experience, I realised that five days in a remote location without internet connection was far from enough. When I think back to Tottleigh Barton now, I know that there's no other place on earth that could ever capture what it really means to feel at one with yourself and the world around you.

Afternoon walks. Cows running down hills. Endless fields upon fields. Nature simply has you in its hold and for the first time in a long time, I was able to think. I was able to see the world for what it was and appreciate more. I took inspiration from a drop of dew on the grass and before I knew it, the drop was called Toby and he had jelly-like arms and legs.

My experience helped open my eyes up to the very concrete details around me that make life so beautiful.

For any young person, Arvon is an extended hand asking you to step out of yourself, leave behind your troubles and stresses and live a little.

By the end of the week, I went from being a stranger among strangers to being a part of a family and I know now that I wouldn't have wanted to go my whole life without meeting the people that I did.

With the expertise of two talented writers, I learnt so much about being true to my writing and finding the best ways to express myself. I gained skills and techniques to experiment with and allow my ability to write to flourish, to wander a bit more.

But most importantly, I got the chance to discover how to write using my heart and mind and learn that there is nothing or nobody that I should let silence my voice. Young people have voices. You have a voice. I will forever be grateful to First Story and Arvon for giving me the opportunity to find that voice and for whoever is next, you're in for an experience of a lifetime."

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**Shakira, First Story alumna**

## *Read Shakira's piece 'Brautu' written during her residential at Totleigh Barton*

Brautu is a man in his mid-twenties. He is a tattoo artist and plays the parts of giver and receiver. He is white skin with embellished tapestry on every visible space. Brautu is in his green eyes and in the way he shaves his hair yearly for charity. His patience and forgiveness is the old bark on trees we carve initials on. Brautu stems from the way he thinks and feels, in the way his dinner is always a vegetarian option from that Japanese restaurant. It is the way he'd run with six dogs in the pouring rain. Brautu is a man in his mid-twenties and Brautu is too far away.

## *How to Apply*

To apply, students must write a 300-word statement to First Story explaining:

- Why you want to attend the First Story Summer Residential
- How the Summer Residential would benefit your creative writing skills
- What being part of First Story has meant to you and why you want to keep writing
- The name of your school

The student statement must be submitted along with the parental consent form below to your liaison teacher by **Monday 4<sup>th</sup> March.**

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## **First Story Residential – Parent/Guardian Consent Form**

*Please complete this form using BLOCK LETTERS.*

**These dates will not change so please ensure your child can attend for the entire trip. The final evening (Friday 26<sup>th</sup> July) is the student performance night. Therefore, we do not allow any students to leave the residential early unless absolutely necessary.**

By signing this form, I understand that places on the residential are extremely competitive and I therefore commit to my child taking up their place for the full week if they are selected, even if they are the only representative from their school.

I understand that my child will be supervised during the week by two DBS checked adults with First Aid and Child Protection training, who are acting in loco parentis and who will do their best to ensure the safety and well-being of all children taking part in the trip.

I \_\_\_\_\_ (Parent's/Guardian's Name) give my permission for \_\_\_\_\_ (Student's Name) to take part in the First Story Arvon Summer Residential from **Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 4:30pm to Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> July 10am.**

<b>Parent/Guardian Signature:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
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*N.B. First Story needs this information so we can contact you directly.*

**Parent/Guardian Full Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Full Postal Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Postcode:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Please return this form along with the 300-word student statement to your liaison teacher by*

**Monday 4<sup>th</sup> March.**