



BARNARD CASTLE SCHOOL

Friday 27th March 2020

Dear Barney Parents and Guardians,

The term 'unprecedented' has been used heavily in recent weeks, but there is no question that as a modern, post-war society, we have never had to face collectively such a threat to our lives and livelihoods. We, as a School, fully understand and recognise the challenges faced by our whole community.

Our objective has and continues to be, first and foremost, to support our entire community as we all come to terms with this pandemic;

- our children through the continuation of their education, albeit remotely in the short term;
- our staff in the ongoing delivery of a holistic education through new and dynamic platforms;
- our parents, without whose support we would not exist.

With regards to the children and staff, it has been incredible to witness the almost seamless transition from school-based to virtual teaching and learning for 673 children of varying ages in such a short period of time. This is a testament to the dedication and care of our staff and the positive and flexible approach of your children.

With regards to you, the parents, we are very aware of the financial strain that the current circumstances have placed on many families. We are determined to be as supportive as possible to ensure that every Barnardian can continue their education during this crisis, and more importantly, return to their Barney education once this pandemic subsides.

In the midst of such national and economic uncertainty, we aim to operate transparently and fairly and wish to share with you an update on our financial position. Whilst we charge in three equal instalments, the majority of our expenditure relates to staff costs and maintenance of the buildings and grounds and is more evenly spread throughout the year. Our aim is to be as prudent and reactive as possible whilst maintaining our ability to be ready when normal times resume. Therefore, it is our intention to retain our high quality teaching staff throughout this crisis as they continue to provide the excellent remote teaching programme your children are currently receiving. This will also ensure that they are here to continue facilitating excellent education and pastoral care for your children when the School eventually reopens.

There are still many unanswered questions for this sector. We are investigating the financial government support for independent schools as referred to by the Education Secretary in his school closure announcement. We are also investigating whether any business interruption insurance will be available to independent schools regarding this crisis; at the moment this does not appear to be the case. We do not, as yet, have explicit or clear guidance as to exactly how grades for Year 11s and 13s are to be calculated. As soon as we have that clarification we will, of course, share it with affected parents and their children, and any subsequent fee impact of this. We also still have no formal indication as to how long mandatory school closures will last. For those boarders who are unable to return at the beginning of the Trinity Term a retrospective credit will be applied.

In summary, there remains for all of us a great deal of uncertainty. We recognise that this may be of little comfort to those who are currently grappling financially with this situation. What we can do is assure you that we will do all that we can to pass on any government support or cost reduction we benefit from directly to you. In the meantime, invoices will be shortly issued for Trinity Term on a business-as-usual basis. However, we plan to offer the following financial support:

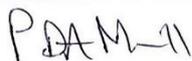
1. An option to postpone April and May Direct Debit payments to June and July
2. A case by case consideration for those who are struggling to pay fees

If you wish to take advantage of these options please contact the Bursary (details below). They will be available to receive your calls or emails from 9.00am on Monday 30th March. We cannot reiterate enough the importance of open communication at this time; please talk to us if support is needed. We will do everything we can to help.

We will be in touch again by Friday 10th April about plans for next term, but please be assured that a great deal of thought, hard work and care is going into ensuring that your child finds next term a productive, enriching and enjoyable experience.

We will continue to communicate with you regularly and with transparency as we look to come through this collectively.

Until then, we wish you all the very best in these uncertain and difficult times.



Peter Mothersill
Chair of Governors



Tony Jackson
Headmaster



Suzanne Metcalf
Bursar

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