



BARNARD CASTLE SCHOOL

Wednesday 6th January 2021

Dear Barney Parents and Guardians,

In spite of the lateness of the government's announcement on Monday evening, we are proud to start term this morning with an established home learning programme in place for every Barnardian, from ages 4 to 18. We are putting the finishing touches to the new and updated version of our Learning@Home brochures and they will be with you by Monday morning. We have also been in contact with those pupils in examination Year Groups with advice and guidance on the next steps. In addition, we are welcoming into both Prep and Senior Schools all children of Critical Workers, as well as a number of our boarding community. We hope you feel that we have continued to approach this extraordinary situation with a calm and professional outlook, and we wish you, and your children, all the very best as they embark upon this term.

Our first priority is to ensure that the essentials required for an outstanding home learning delivery are in place. Once we have a better understanding of the government's requirements going forward and a clearer idea of the likely duration of the restrictions, we will then, as a School Executive and Governing body, give careful consideration to the level of fee reduction that we may offer this term. Fortunately, we find ourselves in a stronger position than in the previous lockdown as our staff and pupils are more skilled and experienced in the provision and routine of home learning, and a significant investment in IT over the Summer has provided us with a vastly enhanced infrastructure combined with new tablets for each member of staff, which will optimise connectivity and delivery.

We, like many others, have to ensure the financial future of this organisation and take the necessary decisions to do so. Last year we gave a generous fee reduction (we are yet to hear of another independent school that gave as significant a reduction) and we also froze fees for the entire academic year. However, we have to consider the financial viability of the School, as well as having an appreciation of the potential difficulties that our parents face. We do hope that you will both understand and support our rationale and decisions, and we confirm that any reduction granted will apply to the period of time that we are in national lockdown and will be credited back. We rely upon parents paying fees on time so that we, in turn, can honour our commitments, and we would like to thank those parents who have already paid fees so promptly prior to today's due date.

As we have from the start, we will continue to act in a transparent and supportive way, and for those who require any assistance with regards to fees as we continue to negotiate these exceptional times, please do not hesitate to contact the Accounts team on 01833 696002.

As ever, we thank you for your ongoing support, understanding and forbearance at this time, and all the very best for 2021.

Yours faithfully,

Peter Mothersill
Chair of Governors

Tony Jackson
Headmaster

Suzanne Metcalf
Bursar