



25th March 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian,

One Community. One School. One Family

I very much hope that this finds you and your loved ones safe and well during these tumultuous times.

This is indeed an exceptional period for all of society. We surely cannot have faced such challenges during most of our lifetimes and rarely during the 600+ years of our School.

The Covid-19 situation continues to change rapidly and of course our School and our community have been affected. However, I want to reassure everyone – including pupils, families and staff – that we are doing everything we can to minimise as far as possible the impact that the situation has on you all.

I know that Mr McLaughlin and Mrs Harrod have and continue to update parents/guardians as to the procedures and resources that are in place to support the academic programme. I want to thank them and all our staff, at both the Senior School and Bow, for all their hard work in dealing with a fast moving and ever-changing position and for implementing remote learning so quickly and expansively.

I also want to recognise the sacrifices that our teams continue to make in providing for children of key workers and vulnerable children, even during what would be the Easter holidays. We recognise the responsibility that we bear and the privilege that we enjoy playing our part in this way.

Everyone here has responded to the call and I am enormously proud of that.

By way of further update, we are committed to offering a full Summer term as far as we can. We are looking at reworking the school calendar and starting the Summer term late – in May or even June – so that we can maximise the pupils' time in school so that their education is as unaffected as possible. Clearly there would be significant challenges and practicalities associated with doing that and we will endeavour to update you all as soon as possible given the changing circumstances. I am confident that Durham School pupils will have the best chance of maintaining their educational momentum, and not damaging the progress they have already made, once normality returns.

In all of this I want to say a thank you to parents for your ongoing understanding and support. You have taken up the mantle of assisting with home schooling in the most testing of circumstances. Nevermore so has it been apparent that we are in this together. We are all one community. One School. One Family. And families stick together. The goodwill and expressions of warmth and cooperation between us all in recent weeks has been profound and something that sets us apart.

From a financial perspective the current situation will undoubtedly present challenges. But we are confident that with your support we can ride out the storm. For our part, we are exploring ways of rationalising some costs although a large proportion of those are fixed. Fee income therefore remains our life blood. I appreciate that there is some economic disorder and so we are grateful to those parents who have paid their fees already. We are also in the process of removing the lunch charge and recalculated bills will be issued soon.



And, as Benjamin Franklin suggested, out of adversity comes opportunity. In that regard we are working hard - even during the current circumstances - to explore various other exciting possibilities which I hope to be able to update you on in due course.

Communities like ours are successful because they combine continuity with change. We have and continue to rise to these very significant challenges and tackle them as we always have and always will, resolutely and head on. We need all your support to do this. And when the dust settles, we will undoubtedly be a different place. A better place. We will learn and evolve from the experience and the ties that bind us will be stronger.

Thank you all for reading this message. Take care of yourselves and your loved ones.

Very best wishes,

Rob and the Durham School team



Rob Ribchester

Chairman, Durham School



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