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Dear parents

INFORMATION ABOUT THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON FINANCIAL MATTERS

I know how unsettling the current situation is for everyone. Things are still changing at a fast pace and there are still a lot of unknowns. I will try and set out below for you what we do and don't know at the moment with things that impact on financial matters.

FREE SCHOOL MEALS

The Government have said that they are making arrangements for vouchers to be available for students who would be entitled to a free school meal when in school. At the moment we don't know what that is going to look like. We have therefore ordered supermarket vouchers for students entitled to free school meals, these arrived today and I will be putting them in the post to you tomorrow.

TRIPS AND VISITS

Cancelled trips

If your child was due to go skiing at Easter, or to New York, you will know that both of these trips were cancelled, as was the day trip to Big Bang a couple of weeks ago. I will take these in order:

Ski trip – we know that we have 20% of the trip costs being repaid by the tour operator, the remaining 80% is being claimed back on our insurance. As soon as we receive everything we can reclaim we will contact you about making repayments.

New York – the tour operator is refunding us the costs in full. We haven't received this yet, but as soon as we have the funds in our account we will contact you about making repayments.

Big Bang – the refunds have been actioned today. It might take a few days to appear in your account.

I apologise for the fact that things will take a little longer than usual as the finance team are doing their best remotely. A learning curve for us all.

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All Other Trips

We will shortly be looking at all other trips between now and September. We are assuming currently that September trips will be able to go ahead, so please carry on making payments for those trips until we tell you otherwise.

We will be looking at trips firstly between Easter and May half term and then from May half term to the summer holidays.

Each trip will be given a status of cancelled, paused, postponed or going ahead. As we review each trip I will email the parents of students registered for that trip with the detail that you need to know at that point.

There may be things that we don't know still, but we will be clear with you what we do know and the implications at that point in time. We need to make sure we follow process carefully so that any cancellations are done at the right time to ensure that insurance covers us if we have paid for things already and need to claim money back in order to refund you. We don't yet know at what point school will be able to reopen and trips resume. We therefore don't want to cancel anything until we are absolutely sure that it can't go ahead. If your trip is paused or postponed, we will be clear with you about the financial implications at that point.

To reiterate, as each trip is reviewed and decisions are made, we will communicate the outcome to you along with any updates about payments still to be made or refunds for any payments you have made already.

BUS PAYMENTS

There are three factors impacting on the bus provision:

- The Government has told us that we need to maintain bus services in order to provide a service to parents of critical workers
- We do not yet know when school will re-open and when it does we have to be ready to provide a bus service again for you
- We have a contract with the bus company based on an full academic year

I appreciate that this is not what some of you will want to hear, but we need you to continue to make your payments so that we can pay the bills from the provider as they fall due.

The Government has indicated that it will make funds available for us to claim from for costs that we have had to make in order to maintain elements of educational and childcare provision during this unprecedented time. I am intending to investigate this as soon as more information is available, and if we can reclaim the bus company costs, we will refund you for the period of closure. I will also look into the school's insurance cover to see if there is anything these that would cover this type of event.

It is helpful to know that for most of us our income will be maintained, if not fully then with Government grants up to 80%. The Government has said that this has been done in order to help families to meet their financial commitments, without which parts of the economy will not recover. The bus and coach industry is a difficult and costly industry to be part of, and if we lose the contract we have with our current provider, renegotiating a new one for September after the current crisis could be very costly.

What I would ask however is that, if you are not in the position of your income being maintained and you are experiencing financial difficulty, you get in touch and we will work with you to spread your payments into next year.

I hope this adds some clarity to the current position. As and when we receive further information that impacts on any of these matters, I will update you.

Kinds regards

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Business Lead

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