

31st March 2020



King Henry VIII Senior School
Warwick Road
Coventry
CV3 6AQ

Headmaster: Jason Slack BSc, MA Ed

Dear Parent,

I hope that you are all managing to keep healthy and safe as we progress through the second week of school closure. We are all certainly having to learn to live in a very different way, including how we educate our children, but we are determined to make the best of the situation at King Henry VIII School. Communication within our community remains very important and I hope that letters such as this, together with our continuing InTouch bulletins and very active social media channels are all helping you stay connected to our School.

Online Learning

Online lessons continue and are proving to be very successful. This has been a steep learning curve, for staff as well as pupils, but they have all approached this challenge with determination. I have been immensely proud of the engagement of the pupils and thank you for all of your efforts at home in making sure that your children access the lessons and participate in a productive manner.

Teachers have been necessarily focused on gaining familiarity with the technology and delivery of lessons in the first few weeks. There is much sharing of best practice between teaching colleagues 'behind the scenes' and this has been particularly prevalent during this initial period. The next stage of our delivery as we move into the summer term will be to consolidate the consistency of approach, but also to develop further opportunities for assessment of pupil work.

I intend to organise a short feedback questionnaire that will be distributed later this week, to help with our understanding of online learning from a 'home' perspective, so that we can improve our offer as we move into next term. Further details of this should follow in Thursday's InTouch bulletin.

It is our intention to have an 'Exam Week' at the end of next half term (as usual), and to provide you with the usual mechanisms of feedback such as Grade Cards and End of Year Reports in due course. Naturally, it will change depending on Year Group, but a program of revision for pupils over the Easter period will be important (as it would be in any other academic year), so that pupils can improve their knowledge and understanding of the material covered since September.

Pupil engagement with lessons has been very good, but could I ask for your further support in making sure that pupils don't access social media platforms during lessons. I realise that this is challenging, as pupils are using various devices to access lessons, but disabling notifications during lesson time is important to avoid distraction and maintain concentration.

Extra-Curricular Activities

As staff are becoming more confident and familiar in their use of the new learning platforms, greater opportunities are being made available for engagement with extra-curricular activities. House events such as 'House Quiz' as well as Outdoor Education Club are two examples of these opportunities. There have also been sports challenges set by the PE Department as well as Rock Club 'riff offs'. Please encourage your children to participate in these opportunities and keep their interests and hobbies going.

Pastoral Care

Pupils should be registering with form tutors at 8:45am and this is an important part of the day so that form tutors can monitor how things are going, academically and otherwise, with pupils. Dr Cuthbert and Heads of Year are also giving good advice through Year Group Teams to help promote wellbeing and mental health. Again, please encourage your child to engage with these activities.

School Fees

The Coventry School Foundation are very aware that the economic impact of the current challenges caused by coronavirus have hit families in a disproportionate manner and several families are struggling. The Foundation is keen to support as many families as possible in this regard. The 'Frequently Asked Questions' document that appears at the end of this letter has been prepared by the Foundation Office and is being distributed to all families across the Coventry School Foundation.

Thank you for your continued support of King Henry VIII School in these unprecedented times. Please keep encouraging your children to stay focused on their learning and don't hesitate to get in touch should you have any queries.

Yours sincerely,



J. Slack
Headmaster

Coventry School Foundation

Fees invoice – FAQ

Why are you charging fees when the schools are closed?

School fees are calculated based on the costs to run the school over the whole year. Although they are charged termly, the costs are spread across the year. These costs have not changed significantly since the schools closed. This is because most of our costs are teaching salaries.

I have read the accounts and there are £2 million pounds in cash. Why don't you use this?

Almost certainly we will need to. We know that many parents have had their income significantly reduced and will not be able to pay fees. We hope that we will be able to support these parents so that their son or daughters do not have to leave school. In order that we can use this money to support those who have hit the worst, we need others to pay their fees. To put this amount in context, however, it would cover only a couple of months of our operating costs which are c£1.6m per month.

Why don't you borrow money from the Government's backed scheme?

We are investigating this. Our understanding is that we may be able to borrow some money but again we would hope to use this to support those who can no longer pay fees, not to subsidise everyone. We appreciate this is difficult for those who can afford it but hope you understand why we think we should prioritise our support.

If salaries are such a large part of the Foundation costs, why are you not furloughing staff?

We are looking to furlough some staff. However, currently it will not be possible to furlough teaching staff. Not only would this mean that we could no longer provide any online tuition, but we also would not be allowed to provide all the information and evidence that examination boards are likely to need so that they can award this year's results.

What savings are you making?

We have stopped all unnecessary spending and will furlough staff that are not providing support directly to pupils. We are not opening all our sites for our key worker provision so are saving some heating and lighting costs.

Why do you not offer a discount – online learning is not as good as being in school and we have increased costs because our children are at home.

If we offered a discount to everyone, we would be unable to help those who cannot pay at all. We know some schools are offering discounts; however, we believe that it is better to target support to those most affected.

These are unprecedented times and some parents have lost all their income overnight. We want to be able to help but without large savings, we are dependent on those who can pay.

We moved to online tuition within a week and we are pleased with much of what we have achieved. There are things that we are learning, however, and hope you will continue to let us know what is working and what needs improving.

My son or daughter is in Year 11/13 – surely, we deserve a discount given that the year may be over?

We know that parents will find this particularly difficult, however the schools still need to provide support to pupils. We will need to give information to exam boards and make sure that this evidence is robust so that your son or daughter get the grades that they deserve. The summer term is always very short for pupils in these exam years. We still need to pay examination fees and support the new process.

Once we have submitted the information for GCSE students, we will move on to teaching an introduction to A Level course. More information about this will be available after Easter. We will also be available for Year 13 students when they get their grades, to help them with their applications for university/apprenticeships etc.

Will the Government support independent schools?

We hope so! If they do, we will pass on any savings to you. The Prime Minister promised support when he announced schools should close but, so far, the Government have not given any further details (except saying that we can borrow money).

What will happen if I don't pay fees?

If your situation has changed and you cannot pay fees, please speak to the Foundation Office as soon as you can. We hope that we will be able to be understanding to those parents who are in financial difficulty because of the Covid-19 pandemic. We have set up a specific email address, hardship@csfoundation.org.uk to help us manage this process.

Why does the CSF not have sufficient reserves to mitigate a situation such as this?

Our fees are amongst the lowest in the sector. To achieve this exceptional value, almost all our income is spent on your children and the small surplus that is made each year is invested in our buildings.

How can you justify that the service you are providing is proportionate to the fees?

This is an unprecedented situation. We are working hard to offer online tuition and support and have achieved much in a short time. We are in discussions with other schools, local, national and overseas, to learn what works and we will continue to develop our provision. Would we rather be back at school? Yes! However, we are trying to make the best of difficult times.