



Haberdashers' Monmouth Schools

From the Foundation Bursar **Mrs Tessa Norgrove MBA**

16th April 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Over the past week, we have been addressing a number of concerns raised by some of our Forces parents in relation to us billing the full amount for the Summer term against the Continuity of Education Allowance. The Executive team would like to reassure you that the schools were following advice from the MoD and have guaranteed that we will reimburse whatever discount we pass onto the remainder of our parents retrospectively, when we have a clearer picture on what this amount will be after the May half term.

You will appreciate this has been a very fast-changing situation and we are responding as quickly as we can to these unprecedented events. We understand that there is a strict process in place for eligible service personnel to claim the CEA, and as there remains some uncertainty when we will reopen, or if our Forces boarders will return to school if their parents are deployed, we followed the MoD's advice to the letter.

Since these invoices were sent to our Forces families, we subsequently made the decision to cut our tuition fees by 40% and will be charging day parents and the remainder of our boarders 60% of the tuition fee while we remain closed to all but key workers' children. We will be passing the same discount onto Forces families but in addition will be offering the following boarding provision to all parents who are key workers: £72.50 per night up to 15 nights and 60% of the boarding element if it exceeds 15 nights. At the moment, this is for the first half term only but could extend for the full term if we do not re-open as hoped in June.

We were concerned that to apply the same treatment to the bills of Forces families in receipt of the Continuity of Education Allowance would not fit the process of applying for the CEA with its associated deadlines and rules. You will note, however, that the service bursary has been increased this term to ensure that only the absolute minimum 10% required by the CEA scheme applies.

As we still do not yet know the length of closure and as we have been asked to keep our boarding provision open for the children of keyworkers, which will include many of our Forces families, we understand that the CEA should be claimed and paid in full at this stage. To be clear, we did not do this in order to treat our Forces families differently from our other boarding families. We merely wished to accommodate the CEA claim process as cleanly and simply as possible for you.

As stated, we intend to review the position after half term when the length of closure and the use of boarding will be better understood. We will then apply to your accounts the same discount given to our other boarding families. We will refund the difference to you and it is our understanding that you are then obliged to declare this fee reduction to the MoD who will identify a mechanism to facilitate the repayment of any unused element of CEA to the PACC where the reduced fees are below the allowance maximum.

We hope that the above offers reassurance and clarity to this complicated situation.

Yours sincerely,