



## Haberdashers' Monmouth Schools

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From the Principal **Mr James Murphy-O'Connor** MA Oxon

24th March 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians

I hope that you are all keeping safe and well.

As ever, I would like to say how grateful I am to all my colleagues who have helped on the rota for children of **key workers**, which includes boarders who returned to us on Monday. We are very proud of how many of our parents are on the front line at this time and we would like to pay tribute to your sacrifice and service as you battle to keep the country running during this pandemic. I am sure that all parents join me in wishing you well.

The entire team would like to thank you for your support as we launched our online educational programme in earnest on Tuesday. We hope that your children have now established a good daily routine as they rise to the challenge of remote learning using **Habsmonmouth online**. Please do continue to log on to this service as it is changing by the day with more podcasts, videos and other interactive initiatives. Whilst we remain positive and hopeful that the lockdown will not go on for too much longer, this service is ensuring that our community remains strong and engaged with education in its broadest sense. **Habsmonmouth online** has propelled us towards a whole new way of delivering our teaching and learning; I have every confidence that it will become a real feature of our schools in the years ahead.

Thank you to all those parents who have paid their fees so promptly, this has made a huge difference to our cashflow as we negotiate our way through a very challenging financial situation. We have been touched by the number of parents who have been in a position to contribute to the **Emergency Fund** and this has enabled us to offer immediate help to those families who have been worst affected by the economic shutdown.

We also recognise the longer-term impact this may have on your livelihoods and I am pleased to confirm that **we will be freezing our school fees at the September 2019 rate** for the next academic year. Please do contact Mrs Tessa Norgrove, our Foundation Bursar, if you need financial assistance in the short term. Our Development Office is also trying to secure additional funds as we continue to approach this crisis head-on. We have moved to secure **banks loans** to ensure that we can meet our operational costs over the months ahead. We are in a relatively privileged position as our Trustees at **Haberdashers' Hall** are offering the necessary security and we remain totally confident we will be in a position to clear these debts in the medium term.

One of the key elements of our planning has been to reduce our outgoings wherever possible. We are now operating from one site and have **furloughed 287** colleagues. We will keep this under constant review. We have had to furlough some of our visiting music teachers, but I am keen to point out that about half of these colleagues have found a way to tutor remotely. I am most grateful for this as it enables your children to develop their musical talents and to retain a greater sense of normality.

I also wanted to confirm that our **term dates** remain as published and we will be honouring the **Bank Holiday on 8th May** to commemorate VE Day, a momentous date in our history.

I am heartened and truly humbled by how the whole school community is pulling together. I hope that you find this update both reassuring and positive as we plot a path through the Covid-19 crisis.

With all best wishes for your safety and well-being.

Kind regards

*LJ Murphy - O'Connor*