

17 April 2020

Dear Foundation Parents

I hope this letter finds you and your families safe and well. I appreciate how difficult and challenging the current situation must be for you all and the many concerns and worries facing you on a day-to-day basis. It cannot be easy balancing home and work during these uncertain times, whilst trying to keep life as normal as possible for your children.

As our wonderful Foundation teachers ready themselves for the start of a Trinity Term like no other in our history, I wanted to reassure you of my and my fellow trustees' commitment to doing the very best by our Foundation families. I also wanted to emphasise our complete faith in the Foundation Executive to manage this extremely difficult situation both strategically and with sensitivity to our parents' and pupils' needs.

I also want to thank you, as parents for all the positive messages of support that you have sent to our Heads and everything you continue to do for our schools and your own children whom you are seeing a lot of at this time! Thank you too for all the parents who have sent us feedback and shared your thoughts and feeling with us; it is really important to us that we maintain good communications through these difficult times.

Our Strategy

As Ed Hester, Senior Foundation Head, outlined in his letter of Friday 3 April, our strategy during the COVID-19 crisis has had two main aims:

1. To continue to provide the highest quality of education and welfare, as is possible for our pupils, whilst also supporting our parents and staff;
2. To ensure the long-term health of the Foundation.

We are confident that this strategy is the correct one and our aims firmly remain the same.

Cost-cutting

One way of supporting parents has been to cut as many costs as we can and pass these savings directly on to you through discounts on the school fees. This we have done through scrutinising all aspects of our business, the furloughing of most of our support staff, assiduous husbandry of all resources, rationalising our campuses, suspending catering across all schools and cancelling or postponing all non-essential projects and purchases.

However, the truth is that schools are fundamentally different from many other businesses and the cost cutting we can undertake is limited. Although the buildings are closed and pupils are not coming into school, we have costs that simply do not go away.

Our biggest single cost is our teachers and we have not furloughed the vast majority of them as they are critical to maintaining the quality of the education we provide and delivering our Home Learning Programmes to your children.

Senior School (11-18 years) at
Princethorpe College

Junior School (4-11 years) at
Crescent School

**Junior School and Little
Crackers Nursery** (2-11 years) at
Crackley Hall

www.princethorpe.co.uk

We have been able to furlough a small number of teachers, such as some PE and Games staff, who do not impact on these programmes in the same way.

Fee discounts and helping those in most need;

Our approach here is two-fold;

- Giving a guaranteed discount on all pupils' fees;
- Putting aside additional funding to help those families whose circumstances have been most severely affected by the crisis and whose needs are the greatest in the short term.

By giving extra assistance to those in greatest need in the short term, our view is that there will be long term benefits for all families through securing their ongoing involvement in the Foundation. We believe this approach follows the ethos in all our schools of caring for all.

One big problem we have faced, of course is, that there are just so many unknowns, not least when our schools will re-open. Latest reports suggest that this may be as early as the end of May and we are of course also preparing for the re-opening of all our schools the moment we are told that it is safe to do so by the government. This is why we also made the absolute promise that if our eventual cost savings are higher than our predictions at this time, we will pass this saving directly back to parents in a refund. I give you my personal assurance that we will keep to this promise and that we will not profit financially from this situation.

Since the first letter on fees we have also listened carefully to parental feedback and reassessed the difference in levels of engagement with our home learning programmes for children across the year groups. One of the key tasks for all teachers is to train pupils to become more independent as is appropriate for their age and maturity. The older the pupils are the more independent they become and the closer their home learning experience is to learning in school.

To reflect this, we have decided to revise our approach and through further planning I am pleased to say that we have been able to give increased, staggered discounts for children in both the Foundation junior schools, which also take into account the fact that lunch is included in their fees. We hope this will be well received by their parents.

The discounts on fees across the Foundation are therefore now as follows:

Reception to Year 2	25% discount on Trinity Term's tuition fees.
Year 3 to Year 6	20% discount on Trinity Term's tuition fees.
Year 7 to Lower Sixth	15% discount on Trinity Term's tuition fees.
Upper Sixth	30% discount on Trinity Term's tuition fees.

I trust that you will have seen the discount appropriate to you referred to in the fee invoice email you were sent on Wednesday 15 April. It should be clearly shown on your online fee invoice.

Hardship Fund

A key part of our strategy has always been to ensure that those in greatest need would have access to more financial support through an additional Hardship Fund of 10% of fees. Since Friday 3 April our Foundation Bursar, Eddie Tolcher, has been speaking individually at length to families who have contacted us. We will do our best to help as many of these families as possible. If you have not yet done so, we would encourage families in need to apply for this help **by Monday 20 April** via [this link](#) and assure you that we will deal with requests with understanding and the utmost confidentiality.

Looking forward

The Foundation's budget plans for next year were well-advanced before the crisis, as you would expect. However, we will be looking at these with fresh eyes in May and June when we will have a greater degree of certainty for our planning. As we have stated before, we have not decided whether there will be any changes to the school fees next year; it is far too early to do so in these volatile times. We do know how hard the current climate is for our families and this will be the key driver all our future financial planning.

The Foundation Team

I would like to pay tribute here to all three Foundation Heads, their senior teams and of course our amazing teachers, for all their hard work and dedication over recent weeks. They have faced huge challenges within extremely tight timescales; managing the schools remotely, responding to new requirements in terms of the public exams, making provision for the children of critical workers, adapting teaching to the online environment - all this combined with a comprehensive programme of staff training on new IT programmes has been conducted with their customary conscientiousness, professionalism and good humour.

Although difficult to single out individuals, Andy Compton, who was appointed eighteen months ago to the new role of Foundation Assistant Head for Digital Strategy, needs a special mention. Andy has been instrumental in planning and implementing so many IT hardware and software improvements across all our schools which are now forming the bedrock for the Home Learning Programmes that will I know benefit all our pupils in the weeks to come. The Heads will continue to provide you with more specific details of these programmes in their letters.

Finally, one of the privileges of my role is the opportunity to spend time with your children and witness first-hand their outstanding learning, achievements and success. I sincerely hope that I will be able to do so again soon; and when our communities are finally able to come together, we will celebrate in a fitting way.

Until then I pray you will stay safe and healthy.

With all best wishes.

