



From the Chairman of Governors, David Levin, and the Headmaster, Ben Vessey.

23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020

Dear Parents,

Thank you so much for your many messages of support over the past few days. These were collated and circulated to staff and have been greatly appreciated. It has been and remains a challenging time for everyone, and I am sure we will continue to work closely together in partnership as we face the difficult weeks ahead.

We have held a number of meetings over the past few days to discuss and work through some key elements of future planning, both educational and on the business side of things, and we are writing now to relay some of the outcomes.

It is critical going forwards to ensure that your children's education remains of the highest quality given the situation we face in the weeks ahead. The feedback from last week's Teams teaching sessions has been very positive and this has given us some valuable insight into what we can do in the future which blends both Teams based lessons and other learning methods. Trying to get a balance between screen based learning and other meaningful activities is vital for a variety of reasons.

We are currently exploring ways of delivering a robust and relevant academic programme alongside opportunities to engage with a range of rich and rewarding co-curricular experiences. This will also include provision for wellbeing and pastoral support. In order to ensure that what we deliver is as effective and engaging as possible we do need some additional time to develop and finalise that offering. To assist with this, we have taken the decision to extend the formal Easter holiday period by a few days so that term will begin on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April. To compensate for this extension the formal end of term will move back a week to Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> July. Obviously, we do not know whether we will be back in a physical sense by then, but I hope you will support this decision so that we are able to serve your children as effectively as possible through the Summer Term.

The planning and preparation under way offers creative and innovative options to ensure that pupils are focused, engaged and supported with the progression of their learning over the term ahead, and into the future. The aim is to ensure they have a sense of structure, motivation and inspiration both through delivery of academic curriculum-based subjects in a manner which is relevant to ongoing courses and future pathways, and in a broader sense. The programme will provide effectively for all year groups, including 5<sup>th</sup> Form and U6 whose horizons have shifted somewhat in the light of recent announcements on public examinations. More details will follow in due course.

On the question of public exams, we are still awaiting further details of how grades will be calculated and awarded by Ofqual and the various exam boards. I cannot add more to the information sent last week, but I can assure you that we will work as hard as we can to support our pupils and ensure they receive a just

outcome. This will require careful review and analysis when we have more information on how this process will work and this will require further work from our staff next term in that regard to support our GCSE/ A Level and Pre-U pupils. It has been intimated also that there may be some exam sessions in September/October for those who wish to raise their grade profile and we need to consider this possibility as part of our planning for the 5<sup>th</sup> Form and U6<sup>th</sup> programmes, alongside giving them a strong sense of purpose and structure through an extended period of time in the weeks ahead. We will communicate more fully on the exam situation when that picture is clearer.

Other work going on currently involves exploring how we might support the local community and offer some care to the children of key workers in a sustainable manner. We are in communication with the local authorities on this matter and it is important that we do what we can in this regard. We are also working to reassure our staff that we will do all we can to support and keep them safe at what is a very worrying time for us all.

The terms and conditions of our contract with parents are explicit in that from time to time it may be necessary to make changes to any aspects of the School, including the manner of providing education for your children, for example by providing such education remotely where the School is required to close the School premises. As I have outlined above, we will do everything in our power to ensure that the remote education provision for our pupils whilst the Canford site is closed during the CoViD-19 outbreak is of the very highest quality and that our pupils emerge from this crisis in the best possible position once some form of normality returns.

Canford's non-fee income from commercial sources such as the sports centre, weddings and summer lets has all but disappeared as a result of the crisis, but the majority of our substantial costs remain. We are taking action to eliminate avoidable costs wherever possible and there will, of course, be some savings such as lower energy, transport and food costs but, as a major employer, the vast majority of our running costs lie with our people who will continue to be needed to deliver and support the remote learning offer that we will provide. Nonetheless, we understand that many parents will be facing huge financial uncertainty and will be justifiably concerned about their ability to continue to pay for a Canford education and we wish to do what we can to help and to ensure that your children can continue to benefit from a Canford education in the future.

To that end Governors have approved a package of financial concessions aimed at reducing the burden on parents whilst ensuring that Canford can continue to provide a high-quality education in such difficult circumstances, to retain the staff necessary to recommence full scale operations in due course, to maintain our estate and to ensure the sustainability of the School for future years. Governors have agreed that, whilst the School's site remains closed, it would be fair to charge only the day fee element of the full fees, currently £9,657 per term, and that fee levels will be frozen for the remainder of 2020 rather than being increased at the start of the next academic year as previously planned. Fees from January 2021 onwards will be reviewed during the Christmas term once the situation regarding the CoViD-19 outbreak is clearer. Furthermore, whilst we do not yet have any clarity on the fees that might be charged by the examination boards to provide those who were due to sit external examinations (GCSE's, A-Levels, Pre-U's etc) with their qualifications, Governors have agreed that Canford will absorb those costs in full, whatever they might be. Bills for the Summer term are due to be sent to you in the next week or so and will reflect these concessions.

The whole landscape is changing quickly and we will endeavour to communicate on significant matters at appropriate times, but please do get in touch should you have questions. We hope this letter provides some clarity and reassurance, and also our firm commitment to supporting the education of your children as best we can in challenging times. There is no doubt that we will continue to work together in partnership so that the Canford community remains strong, supported and ready to reunite here at our wonderful school.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Levin', written in a cursive style.

David Levin

(Chair)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ben Vessey', written in a cursive style.

Ben Vessey

(Headmaster)