11 March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Thank you for your patience and understanding whilst we manage this difficult situation.

Following my message to you yesterday, Mr Morrow, Ms Wood and myself met with your daughters after school yesterday. I explained that, after reflecting on the advice received from the Foreign and Common Office on Monday evening, we had no option but to cancel the forthcoming trip. This was a decision we reached with huge reluctance as I fully appreciate how much the girls (and staff) were looking forward to this.

I did include the link which informed our decision in my message yesterday. I have inserted it below in case you missed it:

*“The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) advise against all but essential travel to Italy, due to an ongoing outbreak of coronavirus (Covid-19) and in line with various controls and restrictions imposed by the Italian authorities on 9 March.*

*Additional restrictions include the closure of museums, cultural institutions and the suspension of all public gatherings and sporting events. Religious ceremonies and funerals are suspended. Ski facilities are closed. Childcare facilities, schools and universities are closed until April 3.”*

Since Easter is when the ski facilities prepare for closure in any event, there is absolutely no certainty that they would reopen after this week. We did speak to the ski company about another country with a snow sure resort. We concluded that, whilst changing location might be possible, because the impact of the virus is accelerating elsewhere, including Great Britain, we could not guarantee that we would not be in the same position of having to cancel yet another trip, this time nearer to the departure date.

As I explained yesterday, we have been in discussion with the ski company, the insurers and the Waltham Forest legal department in our efforts to secure the best financial settlement for you all. The best outcome would be to secure a full refund from the ski company which is what our Business Manager was able to negotiate yesterday. We have now had written communication from our Ski Company 321Ski that they will fully refund the monies paid towards the Ski Trip. Those that have paid the full contribution will be refunded £800 (£815 minus the £15 contribution towards insurance cover). Those that have made part contributions will get the total contributions you have made minus the £15 insurance premium contribution). We are extremely grateful that the Ski Company have agreed to do this, as making a claim through the insurers would have resulted in a lengthier process to get your full contributions back and there would have been excess payments to be made also, which would have lowered the total refund you would have received.

The Ski Company have agreed to refund the monies back to the school for early April time and once we receive the funds back, we will aim to refund back the contributions you have made towards the trip costs as soon as practically possible. With the Easter holidays starting on the 6th of April, we will aim to start making refund payments to parents on our return after the 23rd of April.

To ensure parents receive their refund payments safely and securely, we require parents/carers to inform us of their bank details so we can make a BACS payment directly into your account. We also require the collection of your daughters’ passport and EHIC card. We would recommend you collect this personally from the school but if you are happy for your daughter to take responsibility for collecting her passport, we will be asking for your consent for this. We will be sending you an electronic form via email within the next few days for you to complete requesting your bank details and how you wish the passport to be collected. We feel this is the quickest and securest way of receiving this information to ensure we meet data protection guidelines with your personal data. Once you receive this form please could you endeavour to complete the form by Friday

27 March.

We understand the full refund doesn’t compensate for the disappointment your daughter will be feeling through the trip being cancelled but we will aim to give priority to your daughter for the next Ski Trip we run when the global situation around the management of Covid-19 is more stable in the future.

Kind regards

Meryl Davies

Headteacher

Walthamstow School for Girls

Tel: 020 8509 9446

Web: [www.wsfg.waltham.sch.uk](http://www.wsfg.waltham.sch.uk/)