

WALTON LEDALE HIGH SCHOOL



Brindle Road | Bamber Bridge | Nr. Preston | PR5 6RN

TEL 01772 335726 | FAX 01772 339494

HEADTEACHER James Harris | head@waltonledale.lancs.sch.uk

1st June 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Cancellation of the trip to Italy

We have reached the point where, unfortunately, we will need to cancel the trip to Italy due to take place in July. The current pandemic has meant that there are far too many unanswered questions for me to consider that the trip can take place with an appropriate level of certainty about safety and practicality. For example, how can appropriate social distancing take place during travel by plane and coach and where shared accommodation is planned in hotels? What is the impact for students and staff who are defined as clinically vulnerable or live with those who are clinically vulnerable or highly vulnerable? There is also the matter of a probable 2 week self-isolation period on return. Some families have already indicated that they do not want to participate and this would have a cost implication for the trip overall.

The reason why cancellation is happening now is that we have reached the point in time where we must either cancel or risk losing the entire cost of the trip. Behind the scenes there has been considerable negotiation and discussion between ourselves and NST, who are our travel providers, their insurers and Lancashire County Council Legal Services. Cancelling at this point, or indeed at any point since schools closed, incurs a cost of £9000 which we appear to be unlikely to recover because the policy under which the trip is insured by NST does not explicitly cover pandemics. It would, in my view, be unjust to pass the cost on to the families as the decision to cancel the trip is mine. Therefore the school is going to have to find the £9000 in an already tight budgetary situation. I am not asking for sympathy, just pointing out the facts!

We have considered postponing the trip by a year, but we are then in unknown financial territory - we would be liable for cancellation fees for this year, some families may not want to go next year and we cannot be confident that the cost would remain the same.

I appreciate that some students and families will be disappointed, but I hope that you can also appreciate that the pandemic has placed us in unknown and uncharted territory. Others will wonder why it has taken us this long to cancel, but the legal advice has been to wait and see what happened with the pandemic and there have, as I say, been ongoing negotiations behind the scenes. Mrs Eckersley, our School Business Manager, will now seek to settle the matter with NST and to return the money to you over the coming weeks. We will continue to take up the matter with the Lancashire legal team.

Best wishes and stay safe at these uncertain times.

James Harris
Headteacher