



February 2021

Dear Parents & Carers,

I write to you to provide a brief update on the status of the New York trip. As you are aware, we were able to successfully reschedule the trip for July 16th – 20th 2021. It certainly seemed like the most logical and sensible option when we made this decision last summer. The trip was always going to be contingent upon factors beyond our control and in the months leading up to the Christmas period we were extremely hopeful we would be able to take our students for a trip of a lifetime in July 2021.

The recent weeks have brought serious doubt over the whether the trip will be able to run as planned. The safety of our students is our main priority, and this will always be the key factor in any decisions regarding the trip. Whilst it is hoped the coming months will bring us brighter times in the UK, especially with the rollout of the vaccine, the situation in the US is somewhat different and possibly even harder to predict. We have begun a fresh period of negotiations with the travel company to explore our options, one of which must be the cancellation of the trip. Whilst this news may not be surprising, we understand that it will bring disappointment to our students.

We have lots to consider in this process and will keep you updated along the way. It is important to note that there could be implications for us should we as a College decide to cancel the trip, as opposed to it being cancelled due to other external factors. It will no doubt be a complex and potentially long process, so I ask for your patience whilst we work to fully understand our position. Please be reassured that we still have not handed over any additional funds to the travel company apart from the initial deposit, and all other monies remain safe in the New York account at St Mary's College. We will work hard to negotiate with our travel and insurance companies in the coming weeks in order to achieve the best possible outcome.

To be clear, we have not yet cancelled the trip, but simply wanted to share a realistic picture with you of where we currently find ourselves. We do not have to make a final decision until April, and so therefore have time to explore our options and see how things take shape over the coming weeks. We will of course consider all possibilities and consult with you as we have done throughout the planning of the trip.

I would like to thank you not only for your support of the trip over the past 12 months, but also for your patience. I understand that this is frustrating, especially when we have very few answers at present. We will endeavor to be in touch as soon as we can.

Yours sincerely,

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