

SPRINGVALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Newsletter- Update London Residential

Tuesday 17th March 2020

Dear families,

As you may have seen on our Twitter feed and/or text messages we have consulted with NST (the travel operator) and postponed the visit to London due for Thursday 26th and Friday 27th March 2020. Anxiety levels around travel, safety and wellbeing are higher than ever around school but most of the questions I have fielded have been about London next week; understandably so!

The theatre announced last night that Matilda has been cancelled so I have tried to use that information to force a cancellation and full refund today. As we have already paid the company and the company have paid the relevant aspect providers of the visits to deliver the visit (London Eye, theatre, Rainforest Café, River Cruise, bus company, accommodation, etc) the process for reclaiming the costs may be complex and lengthy. That isn't to say it isn't possible of course. The company have stressed that, due to the present situation, all companies are being very guarded about cancellations and associated rights, responsibilities, terms and conditions. The visit was insured with the company and we, the school- via BMBC- are also insured but as the current situation is so unprecedented there is very little guidance or certainty in terms of what will happen. Many insurance policies have loopholes for unknown/new issues and mass claims, we have to be mindful that this isn't going to be a quick or easy situation to address.

Our choices at this stage are to cancel and seek insurance/compensation or to postpone to a later date. Because the theatre cancelled I would assume we are guaranteed to get some money back but I would feel that, taking this course of action, I am gambling with the money of 55 families. This does sit comfortably with me!

Our other choice, and the one I am currently keen to follow, is to indefinitely postpone the visit. The visit is fully paid for and costed and the staff, pupils and parents were very excited about it before the current pandemic spread across the globe. The company are happy to hold our plans and rearrange at a later date. I have, of course, said that we will not rearrange for specific dates or travel when the current situation is ongoing so we could be talking about postponing for a significant amount of time. My initial thoughts would be to potentially write off this academic year and look at the same children attending as Y4/5 children in the 2020/21 academic year.

Some details- exact menus, theatre shows, etc- may have to change but the essence of the visit would remain.

As mentioned, I feel that this is the best option at this stage but before I make that decision I wanted to write to parents to seek any differing views. Feel free to email me your views ASAP or to vote on a Twitter Poll that I will launch now for the 24 hours. It would be incredibly messy to postpone for some children and seek compensation for others so I am more seeking the general mood than offering personalised solutions.

Today has been incredibly hectic and complex. We wanted to let parents know at the soonest opportunity that we will not be travelling next week as the clock was ticking! By 3.15pm we hadn't even been able to tell staff or the children about it so apologies if you have had to have an awkward conversation with your disappointed child(ren). We will get all of the children together when we have a full plan for what happens next and keep parents informed throughout.

Thank you for your support at this very challenging time.

Regards
Mr L McClure
Head