



# Windsor Academy Trust

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Place of registration: England

30th April 2020

## WAT Statement - Education Trips and School Visits

### General Introduction:

We would like to provide clarification on the current situation regarding education trips and to provide you with information about the trust-wide plan that has been put in place to manage and coordinate the cancellation of trips and the process for reimbursements. First and foremost, we would like to reiterate the strong commitment of Windsor Academy Trust (WAT) to providing positive opportunities and experiences through education visits at home and abroad, and the positive contribution that they have in unlocking the personal potential of all of our children and young people.

The travel industry as a whole is dealing with an unprecedented situation, there have been considerable pressures on the school travel industry and the existing systems and regulations to manage the enforced cancellation of all education trips due to take place over an extended period. We have been working with tour operators, hoteliers, airlines, venues as well as our insurer to expedite the current situation, to safeguard parental contributions and protect the finances of each school. Whilst we continue to progress the claims for each school visit, we have agreed that the academies should start to commence parental refunds over the coming months.

### Key Timeframe of COVID-19 Events for Reference:

#### Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March

The government issued measures with regards to safeguarding and the potential challenges that organisers would face during education visits for adult supervisors or children who may exhibit COVID-19 symptoms and would require immediate self-isolation. Based on that risk, schools were advised against all overseas trips for children under 18 until further notice.

#### Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March

The European Union moved on 17<sup>th</sup> March to close all borders for a period of 30 days, re-assessing its decision before the 15<sup>th</sup> April 2020.

#### Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March

Announcement that all UK schools were to close to students/pupils as of Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March, with the exception of children of key workers and vulnerable children.



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## **Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March**

The Prime Minister Boris Johnson, announced that citizens will only be allowed to leave their homes for very limited reasons, including food shopping, exercise once a day and essential work for a period initially of 3 weeks.

## **Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> April**

The lockdown measures were reviewed on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> April, restrictions were extended until 7<sup>th</sup> May. Dominic Rabb indicated that five conditions must be met before lockdown restrictions can be lifted:

- 1) That the NHS can cope
- 2) That there is a 'sustained and consistent' decrease in daily deaths
- 3) There needs to be reliable data from SAGE that the rate of infection is decreasing to 'manageable levels'
- 4) The supply of tests and PPE can meet future demand
- 5) To be confident that any changes will not risk a second peak in the virus

### **Next Steps:**

Education Trips Scheduled for this School Year (2019/20):

We are currently in the process of managing and coordinating the cancellation of over 100 international and domestic educational trips / activities scheduled for the rest of this academic year. We will be working with the relevant party regarding the claims process for each trip, but in the meantime we have agreed to reimburse the parental/carer financial contributions made to the academy towards the cancelled education visit. Please note the following:

Parents/carers should stop making any further payments towards any outstanding 'education trip' balances.

Refunds for cancelled education visits/trips will be managed and administered by each academy, trip refunds will be based upon the following indicative timeline:

- Refunds for trips in March and April will commence in May;
- Refunds for trips planned in May will commence in June; and,
- Trips planned for June and July will be refunded in July.

This will be a significant and time consuming process for all of our academies, especially as staff are having to work remotely under the Public Health England guidelines. Each academy will contact parents/carers regarding individual education trips in early May and will advise further on the process for issuing refunds.

School Year 2020/21:

There will be no planned education trips taking place during the first half of the autumn term in the next school year (2020/21), academy staff will liaise directly with parents/carers regarding the cancellation or postponement of any pre-existing arrangements.

We greatly value and appreciate your patience over the coming weeks and months whilst repayments are being processed. If you have any queries relating to this matter please contact the Academy directly.

Thank you in anticipation.

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