



25 January 2024

Dear Parents and Carers

Further to our Ofsted report, shared with you last week and on our website [here](#), I am writing to all parents and carers to ask that you consider further supporting us in delivering an appropriate learning environment for your daughters.

I write with significant reluctance, but the School's strained financial situation and the proposed uplift in funding next year of only 1.9% when inflation is running at 4% and has been significantly higher throughout this year, is seriously hindering our ability to deliver positive change in our estate, both capital projects and the improvement and maintenance of our existing site.

Our deficit this year is in large part due to the following reasons:

- Teachers' pay increases received only partial Government funding
- Non-Teaching Staff pay increases did not receive Government funding
- There is no Government funding to compensate for inflation, which has, for most of this year, been running in double figures
- There have been increased requests from our students for financial support, as the impact of the cost of living crisis has hit some in our community harder than others

Many areas of our site are in need of refurbishment - the condition of these areas is unacceptable. We believe that the learning environment has a direct impact on our ability to deliver our Vision and Mission, and thus our desired and deserved outcomes for the students.

Additionally, it is our duty to draw the very best out of all in our community. Therefore, at this time when some families are struggling financially, we must ensure we have enough in our Hardship Fund to support all educational activities.

To assure you of our commitment to bring about positive change, I would like to share with you the improvements that we delivered last summer:

- We upgraded the toilets in English and Drama
- We created additional facilities for the Wellbeing Team
- We refurbished part of the Modern Languages area (including creating a space for smaller group teaching)
- We removed large amounts of asbestos from the School site
- We installed new servers, vital in ensuring our cyber security
- We installed new air-source heat pumps
- We have also been supported by the AHSA, who last year, amongst other things, funded our Reading Scheme and are also providing funding for water fountains which are soon to be installed across the site.

We used School Reserves to fund this work and grants where we could access them. The impact on these reserves has been significant, particularly with the high costs of undertaking work at the current time - this serves as a block to our plans for further improvement of our facilities. There is much more we need to do to improve the site for the direct benefit of our students. For example:

- Providing a covered seating area for outdoor dining; our dining room is too small for our number of students (our caterer Cucina will invest in a Food Pod, for coffees, and light meals such paninis etc within this covered area)
- English and Drama are in desperate need of refurbishment, the area is dark and tatty, and a brighter environment would support student learning and wellbeing
- Modern Foreign languages need additional Pods for smaller group learning and we must complete the ongoing replacement of windows for energy efficiency
- The refurbishment of the Food Tech Room is well overdue (last refurbished over 20 years ago) and needed to support the increasing number of students wanting to study this subject
- To augment the Hardship Fund to enable educational activities to be enjoyed by all

The School has an [AHS School Fund](#) and in the past we have used donations from this Fund to make improvements around the site. In recent years donations have tailed off significantly and we would therefore ask for parental and carer giving to be re-established, to the extent that you feel you are able, to assist us to provide a welcoming environment for your daughters.

Donations can be in the form of regular giving or a one off donation, and as we are a charity, donations can be tax efficient. Please use the link above to access our Fundraising Page where you will also be able to apply Gift Aid. There is also a QR code on this page should you wish to share our fundraising page more widely.

Every donation, no matter how small, will make a difference to the school environment:

- If 200 people donated £10 per month for a year (with Gift Aid £12.50) we would be able to replaced our sound and lighting system
- If 100 people donated £25 per month for a year (with Gift Aid £31.25) we would be able to install LED (energy efficient) lighting in 15 classrooms
- If 100 people donated £50 per month for a year (with Gift Aid £62.50) we would be able to refurbish food technology or install a covered area to increase dining seating
- If 200 people donated £100 per month for a year (with Gift Aid £125.00) we would be able to refurbish English and Drama and MFL

If you are able, please do visit our [giving page](#) and help us to bring about continued improvement in our facilities for your daughters.

I am very aware that finances are tight for many families at the current time, and I absolutely would not like to add to any stress for our community. Please, should finances be hard, reach out to your daughter's Head of Year to access the support we are able to provide your daughter, through our Hardship Fund. I truly mean it when I say that we stand together as a community.

Once again, my apologies for this plea, and huge thanks to all for taking the time to consider my request.

With kindest regards



Marieke Forster
Headmistress