



April 2, 2020

Dear Blue Ridge Parents,

I hope that you and your loved ones are safe and healthy.

While fear and worry remain prevalent, it seems especially important to appreciate the good things happening as a way to bring balance. When I visit our Zoom classes, I see boys engaging with and supporting each other, and our faculty creatively adapting the Blue Ridge classroom to an online platform. I regularly notice parents offering important feedback and encouragement to teachers and to their sons, enabling the distance learning program to work effectively. This is a challenge for sure, and I'm proud of our community's resiliency.

I am happy to announce today that our Board of Trustees has approved a partial refund of the 2019-20 tuition. The School will save a portion of costs for food and energy, and we would like to pass these savings along to our families. Unlike colleges, Blue Ridge and other independent schools do not separate room and board from tuition. At the beginning of the year, our Director of Finance together with the Trustee Finance Committee assessed the value of room and board for the whole school year at \$11,000. This number is based on the costs that the School reasonably expects to incur to house and feed each student.

In order to calculate the per-family refund amount, we prorated the amount of room and board based on the number of days remaining in the school year as of March 16th, which was the day classes were set to resume on campus after Spring Break. After prorating room and board cost, we arrived at \$3,080, which is the starting point for each family's refund. Actual refunds per family will vary based on percentages of scholarship and outstanding tuition balances.

Below, you will see that we are offering three options. We understand that the COVID-19 pandemic has created financial hardships for our families, many with lost or significantly decreased wages. If this is your reality, we hope that the option of a refund check will be a help to your family. For those who are able, please consider the second or third option – applying the refund towards next year's tuition or making the refund a donation to Blue Ridge School.

We are proud of the expert teachers, coaches, and advisors who make up our faculty. We have cultivated this talented team of educators, all of whose salaries and benefits we will honor through at least the end of this school year. For most schools like Blue Ridge, the costs associated with human resources are by far the biggest portion of the budget, and as a non-profit school (501c3), tuition covers 80% of our annual operating costs.

Blue Ridge School has incurred a number of unexpected costs due to the pandemic. The distance learning program, for example, required that we purchase new software, along with

dozens of laptops and webcams so that teachers could continue to work through the Governor's "stay at home" mandate.

These are the three options available to you:

1. Process your refund and we'll send a check to your home. (Note: for families who have outstanding tuition balances, the refund would first be applied to that balance).
2. Apply your refund as a payment towards BRS tuition for the 2020-2021 school year.
3. Make your refund a tax-deductible donation to the *One Blue Ridge* Baron Fund campaign. Gifts may be personalized or made in support of an academic, athletic, or arts program of your choosing.

In order to process your tuition refund, please complete this short survey: [Redacted. Contact the Business Office for details.]

This is a challenging time for us all. I want you to know that Blue Ridge is doing everything in our power to continue the great education you sought when you enrolled your son. We have received excellent feedback on our distance learning program, and continue to make refinements based on parent, student, and faculty input.

Alongside the faculty, staff and administration, the Board of Trustees is committed to the mission of Blue Ridge School and to our plans to start next school year here on campus. For parents of underclassmen, I hope you are closely considering your re-enrollment packages, and we welcome any questions you have about that process. Likewise, we will continue to update you with any new information that arises.

In the meantime, I want you to know this: we cannot wait to welcome you back to St. George, Virginia, and to the beautiful campus that will continue to be a second home for your sons and for you.

I continue to hope and pray for your and your family's good health and safety.

My warmest regards,

Trip Darrin
Headmaster
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