

COVID19: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

(Updated: 07 September 2020)

INTRODUCTION

The questions are grouped in categories. The best way to use this FAQs is to look carefully in the contents below for the question you have. It might also be useful to then look at all the questions dealing with the various topics as another question might better give you the information you are looking for.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
IGCSE EXAMINATIONS	3
Will there be IGCSE examinations in November?	3
What are the logistical arrangements for the IGCSE November exams?.....	3
What do I do if I have transferred or withdrawn from exams completely?.....	4
What happens if the November 2020 examinations are cancelled?	4
Is the school conveying to Cambridge the concerns of the WK community?.....	4
Can I contact Cambridge?.....	4
What will happen to Mock IGCSE Exams this year?	4
What will happen if I lose connectivity or power during an on-line mock exam?	5
What is the timeline in the lead-up to IGCSE examinations?.....	5
Writing Centres: Please remind me where to find the list of prospective writing centres.....	5
What happens if the centre is not willing to take my child/ward?	5
Will my transferred child still be a WK graduate?.....	5
Can my out-of-country child remain registered to write at WK in the hopes that he/she can write there in November?	6
My out-of-country child has transferred to a new centre. If the borders open, can he/she be re-registered with WK for all or some of the exams?	6
If I am a transferred student, who should I contact with questions about exams?.....	6
What is happening with Global Perspectives, Art and PE Studies?.....	6
When filling in the receiving school's Cambridge forms, do I enter each subject once, or do I enter as per the number of papers?	6
What is happening with French and Spanish?	7
IBDP EXAMINATIONS.....	8
How can I get hold of Ms Cummergen if I have any questions about IBDP examinations?	8
Will there be IB examinations in November?.....	8
Is it possible that this situation might change?	8
Can we change our status and inform that the IB that we are open?	8
Can some WK students opt to write examinations?	8
How will IBDP certificates be awarded?.....	8
Since we are not writing exams, can our exam fee be refunded to us?	8
Will the November examination results be as controversial as the May examination results were?.....	9
What will happen to Mock Exams this year?	9
Will the content of the mock exams change (i.e. will we now be writing full papers)?	9
What will happen after mocks?.....	9
How are predicted grades calculated, and will they be revealed to us?.....	10
Since IAs now count more significantly, can we re-do any of our IAs?.....	10

How does the IBO arrive at a final mark?.....	10
Is there a possibility of transferring centres while maintaining the same school?.....	10
Will there be repercussions for deferring subjects (not English and Maths) to May 2021?.....	10
Since there are no exams, does it mean results will come out sooner?	10
Will the new assessment affect our eligibility for universities?.....	10
ONLINE TEACHING AND LEARNING	11
What has the school done to facilitate online learning?.....	11
What can a student do if they are struggling with online learning?	11
Will the school introduce hybrid learning and teaching?	11
Should my child repeat the year?.....	12
How would you describe the “vibe” amongst learners at the moment?.....	12
SAFETY ON CAMPUS	13
When will it be safe enough for the College to restart with teaching and learning on campus?.....	13
How do I know my child will be safe when writing the November examinations?	13
What safety protocols are in place for when students return?	13
What will happen about quarantining boarders as they return?	14
What is the COVID-19 situation in Eswatini at the moment?	14
Where can I find out if Eswatini’s borders are open?	14
COVID19 FEE PAYMENTS	15
Introduction.....	15
May we continue to pay the full, undiscounted amount if we can?.....	15
I have already paid my fee for the whole year. How will I receive my discount?.....	15
I have lost my job and cannot afford even the discounted fee. What do I do?.....	15
I still don’t see why the transport fee (or the boarding fee) is only discounted by 30%. Can you give a clearer explanation?	15
Has the school pursued all avenues for relief so that they can pass these savings on to the parents?	16
What is the financial model that Waterford operates on? Does it generate a profit? Are there shareholders?	16
Can you explain how you arrived at this cash-flow forecast?.....	17
You said that R400,000 was needed in the transition to online learning. What was it spent on?	17

IGCSE EXAMINATIONS

Will there be IGCSE examinations in November?

As of today (20 Aug 2020) Cambridge (IGCSE) still intends to run exams for November 2020. We will notify Form 5 students and parents/guardians immediately if that changes.

What are the logistical arrangements for the IGCSE November exams?

Students who are currently in Eswatini:

- Students currently in Eswatini will write exams at WK.
- Boarders will be able to stay on campus for this period.
- All necessary hygiene and safety protocols prescribed by Eswatini and by Cambridge will be observed.
- Day scholars will come in to school to write their exams. Be prepared to allow extra time before and after exams for hygiene and safety protocols.

Students who are currently not in Eswatini:

- As explained in the letter of 18 August, we decided to go ahead and execute the transfers or re-registrations (as the receiving centre requires). You should all have been in touch with Mrs Mills over the last week to discuss possible centres and how to proceed. Centres are more likely to work with requests from another school than they are to work with parents. However, some parents have been proactive and we thank you for your help.
- **You should also have communicated with Mrs Mills about your decision re French, Spanish, PE Studies, Global Perspectives and/or Art.**
- In the case of a transfer, the student receives a new candidate number, but we will still consider them full members of the WK community for all practical and emotional purposes.
- **If you have not been accepted for the IBDP or if you are not planning to accept your IBDP place, please could you let Mrs Mills know as finding you a centre will have to be a priority.**
- If there is no available centre for a particular student, we will look at deferring your exams to June 2021 (IGCSE), but also see the point in **bold print** below.
- **In the event that no centre can be found at which you can write exams, we will still accept you into the IBDP at Waterford (if you have already been accepted).** You will then have the option of writing all your IGCSE exams in June 2021 at Waterford or just pursuing the IBDP which is an academically higher and more accepted qualification.
- Students write exactly the papers which they have prepared for, even if the centre at which they are writing does not offer that subject or offers it with regional differences.
- All exam entries have been made by Waterford. For those candidates who are transferred to another centre, no extra payment or late-entry fee is necessary. You should only pay exam entry fees once. If your receiving school insists on payment, please do so if you can and send the proof of payment to us and we will credit your account accordingly. We are also committed to helping in whatever way we can so that no student is disadvantaged financially by this situation. Please do be in contact with Mr Lowry and the Bursar with any questions related to Exam fees and payment.
- Cambridge will send the papers to the correct Exam Centre and the Exam Centre will return the scripts to Cambridge with their own exam papers.
- The IGCSE Cambridge Certificate does not say anything about the venue of examination. It is exactly the same as that received by someone writing at WK. All WK students will receive a WK Graduation Certificate, whether they wrote at WK or were transferred.

What do I do if I have transferred or withdrawn from exams completely?

If parents have facilitated a transfer themselves or a student has withdrawn from the exams completely, please can parents confirm with Mrs Mills in writing by emailing igcse@waterford.sz that it is complete so that she can withdraw the student from our system to avoid penalties. This needs to be done by Wednesday 26th August.

What happens if the November 2020 examinations are cancelled?

Evidence of the students' work will be uploaded to Cambridge which will use this to determine the accuracy of predicted grades. Cambridge will award certificates for students achieving passing grades. Exam fees will still need to be paid as the fee is for assessment which will still need to be done by Cambridge markers.

Is the school conveying to Cambridge the concerns of the WK community?

Mrs de Koning has written to Cambridge to express our concerns and address our pressing issues as a matter of urgency. She received the following response:

Cambridge is monitoring the global situation on a daily basis and we will keep schools advised. Our Updates are the definitive source of information. For further information please see:

<https://www.cambridgeinternational.org/covid/>

<https://www.cambridgeinternational.org/covid/november-2020-exam-series/how-do-i-decide-whether-to-make-november-2020-entries/>

Can I contact Cambridge?

The school is in frequent contact with relevant people at Cambridge, but if you wish to contact them yourselves you may do so on +44 1223 553554. Our centre number is SZ007.

What will happen to Mock IGCSE Exams this year?

Mock IGCSE Exams (see 2020-07-24 Form 5 Weekly update):

- Will be online.
- The timetable will be available by the end of Term 2.
- Teachers are going to use an exam platform called exam.net to administer the exams.
- Details on how online Mocks will work and what you will need to do will be sent to you in good time.
- Students who are worried about their typing speed should speak to their tutors and their teachers – we are invested in your success so we have no intention of making these exams any more stressful than they already are.

We do need to write Mock exams because:

- in the event that final exams are cancelled, they will provide us with standardized results which we would use to support our predicted Grades which we will have to submit to Cambridge
- Mock Exams would provide some of the “evidence” to be uploaded to Cambridge should exams be cancelled
- Mock Exams will provide the opportunity for students to be tested under time pressure to demonstrate skills learned and developed over the two-year course (IGCSE)
- Mock Exams will give teachers an overview of student strengths and an indication of where extra support is still needed.

- You all need to write Mock Exams in **all** the subjects you are doing (even if you have had to withdraw from a subject like Art, PE Studies or French because of coursework or orals). This provides us with good “evidence” of your academic ability should we be required to endorse an application or give a reference. It also means that we will have “evidence” for Cambridge should they decide to cancel exams.

What will happen if I lose connectivity or power during an on-line mock exam?

The platform we are going to be using will alert the invigilator if the student loses connectivity. When connectivity is restored, the invigilator will let the student back into the exam if it is still feasible to do so. (If, however, the connectivity is restored 12 hours later, for example, the student will be marked on what they were able to complete.)

What is the timeline in the lead-up to IGCSE examinations?

We are working according to the following timeline. It is subject to change.

- 16 August: All IGCSE exam subject entries to be completed
- 26 August: Final decisions about transfers of students from Waterford Kamhlaba to other exam Centres to be made in order to avoid financial penalties.
- 9 September: Form 5 mock exams begin
- 16 September: Transfers of students from Waterford Kamhlaba to other Cambridge Exam Centres must be completed
- 02 October: Final IGCSE exams begin

Writing Centres: Please remind me where to find the list of prospective writing centres.

Formerly, we have provided you with the link to the Cambridge School Finder site so that you could have a look and let us know what centre would suit you best. Here is that link again:

<https://www.cambridgeinternational.org/why-choose-us/find-a-cambridge-school/>

What happens if the centre is not willing to take my child/ward?

At the moment, Mrs Mills is working with several centres to see if they are able to take our students. Please be in touch with her (igcse@waterford.sz) as soon as possible if you are unable to find a suitable centre. It would help if you contacted your preferred centre yourself to see if they are willing to help. Not all centres have been accommodating and Cambridge has let us know that it will not intervene on our behalf.

Will my transferred child still be a WK graduate?

Our Form 5s most definitely remain Waterford graduates and receive a Waterford Graduation Certificate. Cambridge is the examining body and they issue a certificate of exam results. This certificate does not have a school name on it as it comes from Cambridge. It therefore does not matter where exams are written – the IGCSE Certificate is the same.

Can my out-of-country child remain registered to write at WK in the hopes that he/she can write there in November?

We would strongly advise against this, and would need your decision in writing. We are now at a point where we have had to decide that students outside Eswatini should transfer to other centres. There has been no indication from Swazi or South African authorities that they will allow students to cross borders to return to school. At the moment, our borders remain closed and we must work within that framework. It will be irresponsible (and expensive) for us to adopt a “wait-and-see” approach for several reasons: (i) Borders might not re-open in time in which case the student would have nowhere to write. We will not petition the authorities in this case. (ii) If the student were to decide later that they wished to transfer, it would be far more difficult to find another centre at that stage. Centres are filling up and are reluctant to take late entries because of the added admin it requires them to do. Cambridge will also charge late fees of 38 British Pounds per paper that is registered late. (iii) If the student were able to enter Eswatini, Eswatini health officials have not given us permission to screen and quarantine students. All students are expected to quarantine in Government facilities for two weeks on return to Eswatini.

My out-of-country child has transferred to a new centre. If the borders open, can he/she be re-registered with WK for all or some of the exams?

No, that is not possible. Once a student has transferred, they cannot be re-transferred. Also, Cambridge will not allow a student to sit for exams in two venues in one exam session.

If I am a transferred student, who should I contact with questions about exams?

If your question is about exam times or exam regulations, please contact your receiving centre. If you require any help with preparation or with understanding any aspect of the content, please contact your teacher at WK. We at WK are still very invested in your success.

What is happening with Global Perspectives, Art and PE Studies?

Cambridge does not allow transferred students who then become private candidates to enter a subject with a coursework component at a “new” centre .

If you have been accepted to our IBDP programme for 2021 and intend to take up our IBDP offer, our advice is that you simply “drop” these subjects. There will be no financial refund or penalty. The IGCSE is not a single course. Each subject is a certificate on its own so students can do as many as 10 subjects or as few as three. As such, you will still complete your IGCSE courses and receive a certificate identifying what you have done.

If you have other plans (e.g. to do the IBDP or the IEB in South Africa), you should not be affected at all by not being able to write these particular subjects. Mrs de Koning can write to any school or college to which you apply, explaining why you were not able to write these subjects, and reporting on your performance so far.

When filling in the receiving school's Cambridge forms, do I enter each subject once, or do I enter as per the number of papers?

You will enter each subject once. Therefore, you will enter “Geography” once even though it has three papers. Please note, however, that English Language and English Literature are two separate subjects.

What is happening with French and Spanish?

Cambridge will not allow any orals to be done remotely so if you choose to write French or Spanish at another centre, you will have to do your Oral with the teacher at that centre. That teacher will mark your Oral work and send it to Cambridge.

If you do not wish to do an Oral with a stranger, then we advise that you defer your French and Spanish Exam to June 2021 when you will be able to do it at Waterford with your own teacher.

IBDP EXAMINATIONS

How can I get hold of Ms Cummergen if I have any questions about IBDP examinations?

Should you need clarification or have additional questions, please don't hesitate to contact me by email at ibdp@waterford.sz or +268 7966 6628.

Will there be IB examinations in November?

As of 18 August, WK's status is that IBDP examinations will NOT be held in November 2020. The IBO has declared that schools can use one of two assessment routes available, depending on whether they are open or closed. Open schools will sit exams and schools that are closed will not. This means that all WK students will be assessed using the alternative grade awarding approach. It will not be possible for our students to transfer into open centers nearer them.

Is it possible that this situation might change?

No, it will not be changed now – a decision has had to be taken now one way or the other so that appropriate processes can be followed for the administration of the examination.

Can we change our status and inform that the IB that we are open?

No. Firstly, we have had to make the call already and this cannot be changed. Secondly, we remain closed in line with government regulations and our own evaluation. Furthermore, the safety of our community is at the forefront of our thinking. COVID-19 case numbers in Eswatini continue to rise, and international travel is prohibited.

Can some WK students opt to write examinations?

No. The IBO has clarified that the whole school needs to opt for one or other situation. WK has had to opt for the alternative to examinations. All WK students will need to fall under that approach. It will not be possible for any of our students to transfer into open centers near them.

How will IBDP certificates be awarded?

Final grades will be awarded on the basis of coursework and predicted grades. All coursework will be uploaded and marked by external examiners. The diplomas will still be awarded provided the student has achieved the minimum requirements (24 points, 9 points for SL, 12 points for HL, all CAS requirements, TOK and EE).

Since we are not writing exams, can our exam fee be refunded to us?

The IB exam fee will stand. The fee paid to the IBO is for assessment rather than exams. The fee stands even in the absence of exams because all coursework is now being assessed by IB examiners. We have no indication from the IBO that exam fees will be adjusted. There were no adjustments to the fees for May 2020, even though exams were not written.

Will the November examination results be as controversial as the May examination results were?

Although there was concern that some students did not do as well as they might have done in the IB May session, globally the average grades were higher than in previous years. Another factor to consider is that WK's experience of the May examinations was very positive: the 25 WK students who wrote in May did very well. The IBO is a well-established entity with standardised rubrics and approved algorithms, and we can trust that they will achieve fair results.

On 17 August, revised May 2020 results were released. This revision was as a result of concerns raised about the algorithm employed. New results saw increases in student grades to better align with predicted grades and actual coursework achievements. I am confident that the awarding of final grades in the May 2020 session was fair and that it will be in November 2020 as well.

I also want to be very clear that the IB diplomas that will be issued in November 2020 are in no way different from any other session. They will hold the same value with tertiary institutions and will not indicate the assessment route taken. All coursework is being assessed by IB examiners under alternative grading.

What will happen to Mock Exams this year?

Mock exams will be online. Teachers will communicate the expectations for each subject to students. We will use the platform exam.net for online exams. Details will be sent to students in good time. We are aware that online examinations are demanding in unfamiliar ways. Our mock examinations will therefore be moderated accordingly: they will be shorter, less protracted and more focused. We are confident, however, that our online exams will meet the expected rigour of our external examining bodies. We are committed to ensuring that all our students are able to do their best so we will be working to ensure that we address any issues that may be problematic for students to write exams online.

Mock exams are an essential part of our continuous assessment, which is crucial now that there are no final IBDP examinations.

I have had requests from a number of parents and students to postpone mock exams. Mock exams will be used in the production of predicted grades, which was always the case. Predicted grades are a composite of mock results, coursework grades and student achievement over the entirety of the course. Predicted grades must be generated within a specified time frame for submission to the IB. We are working with teachers to come to a solution that will be feasible, and an answer will be communicated to you as soon as possible.

The dates and timetable of the mock exams will be published by 24-08-2020.

Will the content of the mock exams change (i.e. will we now be writing full papers)?

No. The number of papers being sat and the content of those papers will remain as planned so as not to upset the preparation which students have already begun.

What will happen after mocks?

This has not been decided yet, but will be communicated as soon as possible.

How are predicted grades calculated, and will they be revealed to us?

Predicted grades are based on your mock exams, coursework and performance over the 18 months of the course. As such, if students evaluate their performance critically, they should have a fairly good idea of what predicted grades will be. However, predicted grades are confidential and will not be revealed to students.

Since IAs now count more significantly, can we re-do any of our IAs?

Revising coursework would violate academic ethics. Coursework has always been important and students in all sessions are supported to produce the best possible work. The IB is very clear about the number of times students can receive feedback and amend work and that has not changed for the 2020 sessions.

How does the IBO arrive at a final mark?

The weighting of components in a regular session differ from subject to subject. In some, coursework accounts for over 50% of the total and in others it is as little as 25%, with the balance being made up of exam results. Predicted grades in a normal session do not contribute to final results and are primarily used for university applications. However, the IB has a record of historic predicted grades by school and subject and the accuracy of those predictions historically contributes to their importance now. Final results this year will be arrived at through a combination of coursework grades and predicted grades.

Is there a possibility of transferring centres while maintaining the same school?

No. The assessment route must be consistent for all students. The IB has been clear that if a school is closed, all students from that school will be assessed using the alternative grade awarding. This was confirmed by our IB World School manager on Tuesday August 18th.

Will there be repercussions for deferring subjects (not English and Maths) to May 2021?

The IB requires reasons (medical, bereavement etc) for the deferral of exams or components. If you withdraw from subjects at Waterford you will have to pay to register again in a new school and may lose eligibility for Davis funding.

Since there are no exams, does it mean results will come out sooner?

No. All coursework is being marked by IB examiners and the release of results will be in December, as advertised.

Will the new assessment affect our eligibility for universities?

No students in May 2020 sat exams and they were still accepted into universities. The IB works closely with universities globally and this will not disadvantage our students. The value of an IB diploma stands, whether they sit final exams or not. The diploma will not indicate what assessment route was followed.

ONLINE TEACHING AND LEARNING

What has the school done to facilitate online learning?

At the beginning of the pandemic we ensured that students were safe and prepared for online learning: in some cases, students were flown back home; others were accommodated on campus; others were helped with technological needs.

During online learning, we have kept track of struggling students through phase tracking sheets filled in by teachers or tutors and regularly followed up by tutors or phase coordinators.

We have upskilled our teachers through ongoing internal workshops or outside resources.

CAS and PE teachers are encouraging students to continue to be actively engaged in creativity, activity and service. These are important parts of a holistic life and reflective of our UWC values which we are striving to encourage members of our community to embrace even in these unprecedented times.

The “vibe” of the school is maintained through the online landing page (online.waterford.sz).

For further information, please see our [OTL information sheet](#) on Online Learning and Teaching.

What can a student do if they are struggling with online learning?

The student or family should either email ithelp@waterford.sz OR get in touch with the tutor to find a solution – a solution CAN be found, for example:

- Ms. Cook can help with learning strategies,
- Mrs. Henwood can help with technology,
- Teachers can make plans to accommodate time zones or power cuts.

Contact details are available in the [OTL information sheet](#). Communication is key to addressing any issues which our students may be experiencing. If you are unsure of who to contact for assistance, please contact the student’s tutor.

Will the school introduce hybrid learning and teaching?

We anticipate from the experience of others that a hybrid model (partly online and partly face-to-face) will upset the rhythm we have found in OTL and the routines that have been established. It may also inadvertently disadvantage some students. Asking teachers to tackle yet another change may well lead to teacher-burnout. Thus, our thinking at this stage is that we would prefer not to go for this option. However, in a particular situation, its disadvantages might be outweighed by its advantages, in which case we will explore hybrid teaching and learning. Certainly, if the school opens but a few students are unable to come to Eswatini because of COVID-19 restrictions, we will continue to educate them through online teaching and learning.

Again, according to our second principle that underscores all we do: we will do what is best to disrupt teaching and learning as little as possible.

Should my child repeat the year?

Standard procedure at Waterford Kamhlaba is that there is automatic progression from Form 1 to Form 5. We do not have a “pass/fail” policy as at some other schools. There is an application process for the IB, which for WK students takes into account their performance in Form 5 among other things. This year we have taken into account the current circumstances when considering applications, so there is no need for any student to repeat the year. We are also confident that the skills that have been taught this year are robust and in line with our high academic standards. As such, all our students will be well-equipped to move on to the next level of their education.

How would you describe the “vibe” amongst learners at the moment?

The whole school community is pulling together. Tutors keep in touch with tutees, teachers regularly email other teachers to support each other and the students, a care team phones the maintenance and housekeeping staff, Capitol Caterers works on a rotational basis to deliver meals to the resident students. The landing page is intended to keep the spirit of the school alive. We had the most amazing virtual Kamhlaba Day which showcased the talent and enthusiasm of our students and demonstrated that the spirit of WK is alive and well. Some members are not regularly availing themselves of the opportunities to feel the positive “vibe”, but the opportunities are there and sustaining most of us!

SAFETY ON CAMPUS

When will it be safe enough for the College to restart with teaching and learning on campus?

We will continue with online learning and teaching at the start of Term 3. At this stage, despite the unprecedented and fluid nature of our current context, it has been necessary for us to make this definitive decision about the start of Term 3 to provide a degree of certainty and clarity for our whole community. We will continue to monitor the situation closely, making new decisions as the circumstances dictate.

It may be possible to have limited numbers of local boarders and day students back, although this will depend on our ability to manage any hybrid teaching (OTL for those who can't get back to campus and face-to-face for those that can). We don't want to bring large numbers of students back to simply continue with OTL here on campus.

We are very keen to open as soon as possible as we are very aware that the current situation is stressful on all concerned, parents, students and teachers alike.

Given the current spike in COVID-19 cases which is anticipated to last into October in this region, we don't expect the borders or flights to return to any sort of normalcy for some time.

When we do reopen, we envisage doing it in stages (either exam-years first, or Lower School first, for example) and according to recommended protocols (see later question below).

How do I know my child will be safe when writing the November examinations?

IGCSE examinations will be held on campus for local students. Strict protocols will be spelt out by examination boards and adhered to by WK. We will also comply with all Government stipulated regulations and protocols.

A decision has not yet been reached about internal examinations for Forms 1-4 and IB1. You will be informed once a decision has been reached.

Our first principle in managing the emergency is to keep all safe. This will continue to be our watchword in all we do.

What safety protocols are in place for when students return?

COVID-19 safety and hygiene protocols are already in operation on campus. We are keeping up to date with information from the WHO and from other UWC colleges and sister schools which have already opened in neighbouring countries. Our planning will develop as circumstances and advisories change. Already our nurse is available, and further services will be employed if we open up to more students. We have the support of the local clinic should we require its services. We will continue to keep a quarantine residence (Elangeni which isolates easily into separate blocks). Once in their own residence, students will be required to keep to protocols (chiefly physical distancing, hand-washing and wearing of masks). Other protocols will be required as and when students start returning and these are in the planning phase for us as we observe them happening in schools around the world. These will be communicated to families ahead of time (e.g. dropping off day-students; splitting classes into two; timetabling changes; cafeteria services etc).

We envisage a phased-in opening which will help us to put things into place safely and hygienically.

What will happen about quarantining boarders as they return?

WK is using Elangeni as a quarantine area at the moment. Our plan is that boarders will return in a staggered fashion and will be separated into different blocks of Elangeni and quarantined in these blocks.

What is the COVID-19 situation in Eswatini at the moment?

Please refer to the [Worldometer](https://www.worldometer.com/) website for up-to-date statistics about COVID-19.

Where can I find out if Eswatini's borders are open?

This government website might be able to give you answers:

<https://www.thekingdomofeswatini.com/travel-advice/>

COVID19 FEE PAYMENTS

Introduction

These FAQs were originally posted on the College website on 15 May 2020 in response to the queries the school received in response to the Fee-Discount Letter from Dr Mark Mills (dated 05 May 2020 and emailed to the Waterford Community on 11 May) on behalf of the Governing Council. (His letter can be found on the [downloads/fees page](#) on our website.)

It has been periodically amended as the situation and circumstances have changed.

May we continue to pay the full, undiscounted amount if we can?

We are very grateful for this offer – you most certainly may do so! If you are in the fortunate position of not being adversely affected in the long-term by the pandemic, we agree that it makes economic sense to continue to pay scheduled expenses such as school fees, just as we are encouraged to continue to pay domestic workers' wages, etc. This will enable us to buffer others, as well as to continue to operate, which is essential if we wish to preserve the 'product' that we offer.

I have already paid my fee for the whole year. How will I receive my discount?

If you are in a position to pay the full fee still, please let us know and we will adjust your account. If that is not a possibility for you, please let us know if we can record the discount-amount as a credit for your 2021 account. Failing that, we would be grateful if you could wait a few months until we have a clearer picture of our financial situation. If the repayment of the discount is urgent, please put that fact to the Principal in writing and we will come to an agreement about the repayment of the discounted amount.

I have lost my job and cannot afford even the discounted fee. What do I do?

We extend our sincere sympathies to those who have been adversely affected by the pandemic. Dr Mills' letter reassures the community that we want to ensure that all can continue with their education at Waterford. Our standard procedure for any whose circumstances and therefore ability to meet their fee obligations have changed is for an email to be addressed to Ms Patricia Fraser (pfraser@waterford.sz) who will pursue one of the two options below with you:

- She will either draw up a mutually-agreed payment plan which will enable you to settle your account in an extended time-frame OR
- She will provide you with an application form for financial assistance, which will ask for details of your new situation, and evidence thereof.
- All applications are considered by a committee, and the outcome will be communicated to you by Ms Fraser.

I still don't see why the transport fee (or the boarding fee) is only discounted by 30%. Can you give a clearer explanation?

The bulk of the school's expenditure is on salaries. This accounts for about 70% of the budget. This figure can readily explain why the discount can only be small, since our savings on variable costs such as food, water, fuel and electricity are only about 20% of the budget. This cost gets spread out under the various itemized categories on your account. Therefore, although it is perhaps not as neat as is implied here, this is

perhaps the easiest way to understand it: the transport fee has to cover not only the costs of fuel and running costs, but also the salaries of the drivers. Similarly the boarding fee has to cover not only the costs of food, water and electricity, but also the salaries of those who maintain the living spaces, clean the hostels and look after the boarders. We have managed to cut some of these costs, but we have pledged to continue paying basic salaries even to those who are unable to do their jobs under lockdown.

Even this is probably an over-simplification. The full explanation is lengthy and fraught with complexity. Our previous explanations have grappled with how to best articulate this, and have sometimes perhaps been inadequate, but I think this has been because of an attempt to be clear and accessible, and not out of a reluctance to be transparent, as has sometimes been suggested. I think it was in this spirit that Dr Mark Mills quoted Stephen MR Covey on “trust”. The governors, the bursar, the management team and myself have spent extensive time and energy on this matter, and I do believe that we have looked at the budget carefully, sensibly and thoroughly, approaching it with clear financial wisdom as well as compassion towards account-payers, students and staff, and arriving at a solution which, although fraught with uncertainty and complexity, provides an honest and fair outcome. I hope that if we all approach the matter with the trust that Dr Mills asked for, we will hear and understand each other.

Overall, in working out the discount we worked out (as best we could, given the uncertainty) what costs we are saving while the students are not on campus, and to pass those on to the parents. We are certainly not trying to profit from this situation but are trying to stay afloat so that overall, the 'package' that we deliver to you over the full time that each student is with us will not be compromised at all.

Please remember that this explanation goes hand in hand with a reminder that if you yourself have been hit financially by the pandemic, we are more than happy to offer you an extended payment plan or further relief.

Has the school pursued all avenues for relief so that they can pass these savings on to the parents?

The governments of some countries have been able to offer extensive relief to small businesses (loan repayment extensions, salary insurance payments, etc). Eswatini is not in a position to offer much in this area. There are some small measures being made available to small businesses and vulnerable individuals. Many of the categories of relief do not apply to us as a school. We have joined other ISASA schools in a bid for some relief that is available, but we feel that it is not quite morally right for us as WK to take much of this, since there are schools whose need is more imminent and more extensive than ours.

What is the financial model that Waterford operates on? Does it generate a profit? Are there shareholders?

- The College is set up as a section 21 non-profit company under the Eswatini Companies Act. As such it is not owned by any individual or shareholders or for-profit company.
- It operates mostly as a cash business. The revenue received each year from our fee payers and scholarship sponsors covers the bulk of our expenses in any given year. To illustrate this, our budgeted surplus this year is just E 203,000, a very tight surplus on an operating budget of some E 90 million.
- When buying big ticket items (such as buses), we may take out a bank loan, but we generally avoid having to service any debt.
- Any surpluses that we do manage to achieve in any year are used together with funds raised from external donors to renovate existing or build new buildings (the new Dining Hall, the classroom block, the MP hall, the Energy Hub, and currently Ekukhuleni residence). Unlike most independent schools we have never charged current parents a development levy to cover these capital costs.

- Apart from employees none of those involved in a voluntary capacity (the Governing Council, any of its committees, the Parents Staff Association) receive any form of remuneration or Board fee for their involvement in the school.
- Two of the support services of the College are managed internally (housekeeping and maintenance) and two by external service providers (catering and security).

Can you explain how you arrived at this cash-flow forecast?

A few points to note:

- This is a forecast. It is as accurate as we can be at this time. The figures I quote below are based on version 17, which reflects the thinking that has gone into this to date.
- It is based on a scenario in which we remain closed until year end. We expect to open earlier but we thought it prudent to base our projected cash flow on a scenario in which we remain closed until year-end.
- It is based on the premise that all of us (parents, students, teachers and governors) expect that the overall excellent educational package which the students have paid for is not affected in the long-term. To do that the forecast is based on ensuring all the staff (teachers, drivers, maintenance staff, housekeeping staff, catering staff, boarding staff, etc.) are in place on our return to normal teaching.
- Of course as this is a forecast it could change, dependent on the particular circumstances in the coming months.

The big-ticket items accounting for a loss of revenue of about E 14 million are:

- Tuition and boarding revenue will be down by about E 6.3 million based on the 30% discount on boarding fees.
- We estimate that revenue will be drawn down by a further E 7.2 million due to an increase in bad debt from parents who lose jobs or income.
- Transport revenue will be down by about E 0.5 million due to the 30% discount for transport.

We have added a contingency cost of about E 0.5 million to account for the increase in expenses due to online teaching. The total expected shortfall of E14.5 million we expect to make up with savings of some E 12.1 million. These are (in E millions):

- Staff: 1.0
- Food: 5.3
- Energy: 1.3
- Transport: 0.3
- Other services: 4.2

That leaves us with a shortfall at the end of the year of about E 2.4 million.

As Dr Mills mentioned we will monitor the situation and we reiterate our promise: “We pledge that if the outcomes are better than we have predicted, and the deficit is less than expected, we will pass this on to our fee payers.”

You said that R400,000 was needed in the transition to online learning. What was it spent on?

There were many costs, such as upgrading WiFi and supplying data and sometimes even laptops to students who were not otherwise able to continue with online learning. Also, when the lockdown was initially threatened, we flew several children home so that they would not be stranded away from home for months. At the moment, several students are residing on campus either because they could not make it home, or because the most efficient way to provide them with circumstances conducive to online learning

was to accommodate them on campus. Let me reiterate Dr Mills' pledge that this if the full R400,000 is not all used, we will pass the savings back to the parents.