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Dear International School Students and Parents,

We are pleased to write to you to set out the UK Government's ongoing commitment to the safety, welfare and education of all our students studying at schools in the UK and at British style schools overseas.

As restrictions begin to ease across the UK and we reopen our schools and further education colleges, we have worked closely with our independent schools sector as we jointly navigate our way through the issues and uncertainty raised by the pandemic. We recognise the important role which international students play in our independent schools and wider UK society, and we want to emphasise how much we value the positive contributions you bring socially, culturally and economically. We are committed to supporting independent schools and want to welcome more pupils to British schools, both at home and overseas.

It is clear that boarding schools have continued to take positive and decisive steps to make sure that teaching and learning are COVID secure, and that students are supported, safe and well looked after. The safety of students is paramount and for that reason, we will continue to work to ensure that you have the information and guidance required to reassure you of the high standards in British schools.

All governments across the UK continue to adhere closely to the most up-to-date scientific advice on our management of the Covid pandemic, as has been the case since its start, and our responses are calibrated to the level of threat posed by the virus and entirely informed by the data and guidance we receive.

NHS services are available to both domestic and international students. International students will always be able to access treatment that clinicians consider is immediately necessary or urgent at no upfront cost.

We acknowledge the impact that remote learning has had on many school students, and that is why we have taken steps to remove the barriers preventing students starting or returning to study at schools in the UK. We are pleased to have published guidance recently which explains how boarding school students returning from 'red list' countries can serve their UK quarantine in accommodation arranged by their boarding school, rather than in a managed quarantine hotel. This ensures that many more students can

return to the school environment without delay. Furthermore, we have provided guidance to ensure boarding schools are aware of the arrangements that need to be put in place for quarantine accommodation, transport from the port of entry and testing for those students who are required to quarantine. As you will be aware, independent boarding schools are required to meet the independent school standards and to adhere to UK requirements in relation to boarding school students quarantining. The UK has very high standards of regulation for boarders and, driven by a desire to maintain these standards, the Department for Education intends to commission additional inspections of a sample of boarding schools while this guidance applies. This will provide a further degree of reassurance to parents that schools are complying with the quarantine requirements and safeguarding all students in our schools.

In addition, further measures have been introduced to safeguard the health of our school students and the teaching workforce across our sector. We have made lateral flow COVID-19 tests available to all schools and colleges and students should be offered regular twice weekly testing to help identify those carrying the virus without displaying symptoms. This approach aims to keep as many staff and students in schools and colleges as possible and prevent further disruption to their education.

UK boarding schools offer students an outstanding education and are very much valued for the positive contribution they bring to society as a whole. International students make our world-class schools even better. We are committed to prioritising education and are certain that students starting or returning to boarding schools in the UK can do so with confidence. We look forward to our ongoing work with our school sector to ensure that the education we provide continues to be the best in the world.

As a government, we are proud that so many parents trust UK schools and British style schools overseas to give their children the best possible education. This cultural exchange helps build life-long friendships, as well as laying the foundations for future networks, and important business, political and diplomatic bridges.

Yours sincerely,



**BARONESS BERRIDGE OF THE
VALE OF CATMOSE**

**PARLIAMENTARY UNDER
SECRETARY**



GRAHAM STUART MP
Minister for Exports
Department for International Trade