



LORETO CONVENT
DARJEELING - 734101

Email id loretoconventdarj@gmail.com

Phone: 2255739

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CIRCULAR TO PARENTS, GUARDIANS AND STAFF OF LORETO CONVENT, DARJEELING

Dear members of the family of Loreto Convent Darjeeling, greetings of the festive season as we struggle with the Covid-19 pandemic while trying to return our lives to normal. I write to you to communicate the position of the Founder Body of the Loreto Schools regarding the recent litigation over school fees during this crisis.

As many of you are aware, a group of parents had moved the Calcutta High Court over perceived exorbitant fees being charged by various schools in the pandemic. 145 schools were mentioned in the case although specific complaints were not made against them all. That case has now culminated in a Judgment dated October 13, 2020 which has laid out a series of points to be followed by all Schools in West Bengal.

Many of you might not be aware that prior to the case, all the Loreto Schools took voluntary decisions unanimously reaffirming commitment to the students, staff and our mission of education, to ensure specific steps on our parts so that no student or staff would suffer at this time due to financial hardship. We provided waivers, concessions and assistance to all students who needed it, together with aid to families and students who were barely able to survive the worst of the pandemic. We are proud that we weathered the storm fairly well, and by far and large most parents or staff had no complaints or dissatisfaction.

Now, in compliance with the Judgment of October 13, 2020, all Loreto Schools have unanimously adopted resolutions implementing its points. The content of the Judgment as well as the specific points ordered are available on the website of each of the Loreto Schools for your perusal together with the revised concessionary monthly fee structure as ordered by the Court. All parents are requested to visit the website of the respective schools, read the Judgment and fee structure, and see how it applies to them individually.

Of the 28 points in Paragraph 61 of the Judgment, there are certain immediate practical issues that we specifically wish to communicate to all of you, as members of our Loreto family. These are:

- There will be 20% reduction across the board towards tuition fees and session fees to every student for the period April 2020 to the month following the one in which schools reopen in physical mode.
- The reduction of 20% will be based for each month on the fees for the corresponding month in 2019.
- No increase in fees during financial year 2020-21
- No increase in salaries of teachers or other employees during 2020-21 – if any increments have been given, these will not be realised out of school fees during 2020-21.
- No charges towards unused facilities such as laboratory, craft, sports facilities or extracurricular activities.

- Parents who are financially stable can choose to waive the 20% reduction to assist the Schools in maintaining financial balance in this crisis, and in fact have been asked to do so by the High Court if their financial situation does not merit the reduction.
- Parents who are severely affected financially and wish for further reduction or waiver or exemption or delayed or instalment payments to apply for the same in accordance with the procedure given by the High Court including submission of application supported by their financial statements certified by a qualified auditor and accompanied by a declaration by the parents verifying the particulars to be true and correct – these are to be submitted positively by November 15, 2020.
- Schools are to take decisions on merit and communicate the decision to the parents concerned by December 31, 2020.
- By November 30, 2020, all fees payable as per the Judgment, for the period up to November 30, 2020 should be tendered on behalf of all students. If fees are not paid, and no application is made for further reduction or waiver or exemption or delayed or instalment payments, with effect from December 8, 2020 the Schools may have to consider disallowing students as allowed by the High Court Judgment although this harsh measure is one that we do not want to resort to at all.
- No student can apply for a transfer certificate without clearing the full amount of fees as per the Judgment
- Fees payable by students to boards for examinations or otherwise shall have to be paid in addition to the monthly fees and other charges in terms of this order and there is no waiver or reduction of these fees or charges
- There will be no refund of the fees already paid. However, to the extent fees have already been paid which are in excess of the directions contained herein, suitable adjustments will be made over the remaining months of the financial year, unless the parents agree in writing otherwise. Students of Class X and Class XII who will be leaving the Schools, will be accommodated separately in this regard, and we request those generous parents who have paid fees in advance and helped us tide over the worst of the crisis, to please write in to us for further guidelines or in case of any doubts.

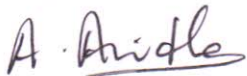
Special requests from the Loreto Schools

- Our primary mission has always been education to all of the best standard we can provide, and to help those in need. The High Court's order reaffirms the mission of schools – to help the students and staff who are part of our family, to do it selflessly, and at the same maintain our independence and control of our institutions, without thinking of enrichment of ourselves, especially that which is disproportionate or unjust.
- Our schools are a family. We request all to act in the spirit of cooperation and consideration for others to help us get through this crisis without conflict – we are here to help you, for your child is as much our responsibility.
- Profit, financial benefit and money are not our priorities. However the reality is that we need to keep the schools afloat and functional and to ensure that our staffs are paid and their dependence on the schools are addressed. Our teachers and staff depend on us for their livelihoods and existence. We must look after them, and look out for them at all costs through these hard times.
- In addition to this, all who are part of the Loreto family know that we have a lot of other responsibilities to society and those who are less fortunate than us, and that is where a lot of our costs arise, even dealing with basics as widely varying as food rations, clothes, books, mobile recharges and sanitary materials.
- It is for those in our family who have enough, to choose to give what they can for others in need, for whom Loreto is a means of survival. The simplest way to do that is through making payment of fees so that we can use the money in the way we always have, to cover our costs and for the betterment of others.

- We still incur heavy expenses in each of our Schools towards our social commitments and helping the needy students, and those less fortunate than us. For this reason, we appeal to those who do not need to avail the reduction of 20% fees, to write or communicate this to us immediately at the dedicated email address of the Covid Concession Committee, Loreto Convent Darjeeling, which is ccclcdarjeeling@gmail.com . This small gesture on your part will help reduce our burden and our concern for the coming months ahead.
- All existing concessions provided to parents under any category whatsoever will be included within the 20% reduction and adjusted against the same.
- You have trusted us with your children - to educate them and instil values in them. We ask you to help us, as we also trust you as part of our family to stand by us. We hope that those who can do without the concessions and understand the practical issues of keeping the schools alive and running will stand by us in our times of need, just as we stand by all of you.
- The Loreto way of life has never been about marks only; it is about being good human beings and helping each other to make the world a better place. We hope, pray and trust that these values will show in all of us, and come back from our entire family of staff, parents and administrators, and we will get through all of this together, helping those in need, making sure we maintain as much normalcy as possible for our children, and with the greatest good to the greatest number.

God Bless you all and stay safe.

Thank you,



SR. A. ANITHA
Principal

Principal
Loreto Convent
Darjeeling