

From: John Black
Sent: Wednesday, April 29, 2020 2:42 PM
Subject: DC-trip cancelled

8th grade families:

As a follow-up to my email of April 25 (see below), a significant majority of responding families have indicated their preference to cancel the DC-trip entirely. Accordingly, in the coming days I will notify Hemisphere Travel of our decision to cancel (and not reschedule) the DC-trip. Our representative recently indicated that the "nonrefundable expenses" are likely to be minimal. Accordingly, I am hopeful that the majority of your money will be returned, regardless of whether you purchased the optional travel insurance. I will inquire as to when you can expect the refund ... and then update you accordingly.

Finally, we continue to explore options for a graduation ceremony that allows the 8th graders to get-together one last time before moving-on to high school. In the coming weeks I will be sharing some options, and then look forward to your feedback.

Best regards
John Black, Head of School

From: John Black
Sent: Saturday, April 25, 2020 9:31 AM
Subject: Re: Update: 8th grade DC-trip

8th grade families

I hope this email finds everyone remaining safe and healthy during these challenging times! I also hope you are finding our Distance Learning Program to be reasonably effective. Please don't hesitate to share any concerns!

I have been in-touch with our representative from Hemisphere Travel regarding the DC-trip that was rescheduled to June 10-14 (see previous correspondences below). Due to the current uncertainty of venues reopening in DC, it is our rep's recommendation not to travel in June. We are, therefore, left with two options: (1) cancel the trip, or (2) try to reschedule for July. Please reply with your preference and I'll make a decision (before next Friday) that considers the majority opinion, open travel-dates, and Mr. Schutz' availability.

Regardless, we will NOT be traveling on June 10.

As for Hemisphere's refund policy ... our travel representative indicates that if the tour is cancelled (immediately or later in the Summer), ALL families will receive a refund, less admin fees and any nonrefundable expenses. Those families who purchased the optional travel insurance can then file a claim to recoup some of the funds not returned. I have asked for clarification on what is meant by "nonrefundable expenses."

I look forward to your feedback ...

John Black, Head of School

From: John Black
Sent: Thursday, March 19, 2020 9:54 AM
To: 8th grade families
Subject: VPS 8th DC-trip rescheduled

8th grade families

I hope this email finds everyone staying healthy and doing your best to enjoy the Spring Break!

As a follow-up to my email of March 13 (see below), Hemisphere Travel was able to reschedule our DC-trip to June 10-14. I appreciate their efforts to make this happen! Of course, there is no guarantee that the trip will ultimately push-thru given everything that is happening nationwide. Nevertheless, this keeps the trip "alive" for a bit longer.

For those of you who purchased the travel insurance, it will be transferred to the new travel dates. For those of you who did not purchase the optional coverage, I would suggest contacting Hemisphere directly at 800 323 6439 to clarify their policy in the event you may not wish to participate in the trip.

Finally, some of you are also scheduled to participate in the trip to Europe which is scheduled to depart on June 15. Obviously back-to-back trips are not ideal. But the new DC-dates were the only ones available from late May onwards. Accordingly, families will need to make their own decision regarding the viability of participating in both trips (please refer to the update below from Worldstrides' website regarding the status of the Europe trip).

I will continue to keep you updated with any new information that I may receive from any of the travel companies.

As always, please don't hesitate to reply to this email with any questions for concerns.

Stay healthy!

John Black, Head of School

FROM WORLDSTRIDES:

Will my tour, event, or program be cancelled?

We are proactively working with Program Leaders to postpone most programs through May 10. We are working with Program Leaders to communicate these changes directly, as we are handling each on a case-by-case basis. We are committed to student safety and will not take anyone to a location that is not deemed safe for travel. As new information becomes available, we will not hesitate to make changes, if needed. We will continue to work on programs with most imminent departure dates first.

I am worried about traveling later this year. What should I do?

Our recommendation is to see how the situation develops before making any decisions. To help our travelers, we are changing the deadlines associated with our cancellation policies. If you are worried about the date that a new cancellation penalty will apply, please know we have extended these deadlines. This allows you to wait until closer to the time of your travel to make a decision. The cancellation window will remain frozen until at least March 31.

From: John Black

Sent: Friday, March 13, 2020 12:23 PM

Subject: 2nd FOLLOW-UP: VPS 8th DC-trip

8th grade families:

I hope everyone is looking forward to the start of Spring Break! It will certainly be an interesting two weeks!

Mr. Schutz and I continue to receive excellent service from Hemisphere travel, who are no doubt being inundated with schools choosing to cancel their April trips. As of today, however, Hemisphere themselves have not cancelled their DC trips. But venues in DC continue to close, including the National Cathedral and Ford's Theatre, which are typically two of the locations visited by our students. Additionally, the Smithsonian has cancelled events, although their museums remain open, for now.

Accordingly, it is clear that our best course of action is to reschedule the trip to late May or early June, thereby giving the current situation some time to settle-down.

Of course, we will need clarification regarding the impact this change would have on Hemisphere's refund policy, as well as the optional travel insurance that many of you purchased. My hope is to have some clear answers for you before next Tuesday which is the last day we can cancel the trip in order for everyone to receive the minimum refund of \$400 (for the airline tickets) which I have referenced in my previous emails.

Finally, over the past few days I have received feedback from quite a few families who prefer to cancel the trip immediately. I appreciate and share their concern. However, I would suggest that everyone waits a bit longer until further information is available about the option of rescheduling the DC-trip. Once the new travel dates are confirmed, each family can make their decision of whether or not to travel. The school does have another trip planned for mid-June (to Europe), so I'll make sure that the new dates for DC do not conflict with the planned Europe-trip, given that some families had planned to participate in both trips.

I truly do appreciate everyone's patience! We want the children to have the experience of traveling together to DC ... and we certainly don't want families to lose money. At the same time, the safety of the children, parents, and VPS staff is obviously the priority. Once again, I feel that our best course of action is to give Hemisphere the time to make their best effort to reschedule the trip. Of course, even by delaying the trip, there is no guarantee that the travel situation will change, or that DC-venues which are now closing will be re-opened. Nevertheless, it seems worthwhile to give it a shot!

I'll be in-touch with all of you as soon as I receive feedback from Hemisphere. Please continue to check your emails during Spring Break.

**Best regards,
John Black, Head of School**

From: John Black
Sent: Thursday, March 12, 2020 11:39 AM
Subject: FOLLOW-UP: VPS 8th DC-trip

8th grade families

I hope this email finds everyone reasonably well!

As a follow-up to my email from yesterday (see below), I appreciate the feedback I have been receiving from everyone, including those who have posted their concerns on

Facebook. I will continue to receive feedback through tomorrow, and then make a decision on whether to cancel the trip immediately, or wait a bit longer. While the safety of the children and accompanying staff is our priority, I also understand that families have invested significantly in the trip, and not everyone purchased the optional travel insurance. Accordingly, you'll receive an email from me at some point tomorrow with the school's plan moving forward.

In the meantime, a few of you have asked the following questions ...

1. *Is it an option to postpone the trip until May or June?* I asked this question of Hemisphere yesterday and expect feedback from them later today or tomorrow.
2. *If the trip is cancelled before March 18, how much money would families be refunded for the cost of the flight (which has yet to be purchased by Hemisphere)?* Our Hemisphere representative has indicated that approximately \$400pp could potentially be refunded if the "group" decides to cancel. This refund would not necessarily be available if individual families cancelled without the optional travel insurance.
3. *Why was the meeting with Mr. Schutz cancelled?* At this point, I prefer to review all correspondences with families prior to distribution. This is most easily accomplished via email. Mr. Schutz has overseen the DC-trip for more than a decade, but whether or not the school decides to cancel the trip, is not Mr. Schutz's responsibility. It is mine alone, in consultation with our School Board (who also prefer to review correspondences prior to distribution, whenever possible).
4. *Why were parents not informed earlier about the possible cancellation of the trip?* In all honesty, a week ago I did not foresee the widespread cancellations that are now occurring. For example, the National Cathedral in DC (which is typically part of the trip's itinerary) announced their closure yesterday. Additional sites in DC are likely to begin closing soon. Hemisphere Travel has been very good about posting updates on their website, but they clearly do not have the current intention of cancelling the trip.
5. *With the extraordinarily unusual events now unfolding, why wouldn't Hemisphere be willing to refund all costs, regardless of whether a family purchased the optional travel insurance?* VPS has partnered with Hemisphere for many years and our experience with them has always been very positive. I believe that they would "do their best" to minimize losses, and VPS will certainly encourage them to do so. Ultimately, however, they will be guided by their stated refund policy.

From: John Black
Sent: Wednesday, March 11, 2020 12:34 PM
To: 8th grade families
Subject: IMPORTANT: VPS 8th DC-trip

8th grade families:

As noted in a previous email, tomorrow's Open House (Come Explore What's Poppin') AND the 8th grade meeting for Washington DC have been postponed due to the strong likelihood of rain.

Nevertheless, some important decisions will need to be made within the next week regarding the DC-trip.

Mr. Schutz and I spoke with Hemisphere Travel today, and they indicated that the trip remains on-schedule since there are currently "no travel restrictions or advisories within the United States." Nevertheless, we understand that some families have reservations about the trip, given the continued spread of COVID-19. Accordingly, we have three options to consider ...

1. If the trip goes forward as planned, but individual families prefer to cancel, then each family is responsible for 100% of the tour cost, as per Hemisphere's refund policy (see A-C below, and attached), UNLESS the family purchased the optional *travel protection* (see below and attached). NOTE: under no circumstances will Valley Prep provide refunds.
2. If the school decides to cancel the entire trip, then each family remains responsible for 100% of the tour cost, as per Hemisphere's refund policy (see A-C below, and attached), UNLESS the family purchased the optional *travel protection* (see below and attached). NOTE: under no circumstances will Valley Prep provide refunds.
3. If Hemisphere decides to cancel the trip, then each family remains responsible for 100% of the tour cost, as per Hemisphere's refund policy (see 1-3 below, and attached), UNLESS the family purchased the optional *travel protection* (see below and attached). NOTE: under no circumstances will Valley Prep provide refunds.

Currently, it is the school's preference to cancel the trip, given that other local schools are expected to begin canceling national and international trips. However, we understand the financial impact to families of doing so. Accordingly, we'll wait a bit longer in order to receive feedback from our families. If the school ultimately does decide to cancel the trip, we will do so on or before March 18. On March 19, Hemisphere will be purchasing the airline tickets. If we cancel prior to this date, then we may be able to arrange for families to receive a partial refund of the flight cost, regardless of whether or not they purchased the travel protection.

Your feedback is welcomed and appreciated.

Best regards

John Black, Head of School

REFUND POLICIES (see attachments for further details):

A. GROUP CANCELLATION

- a. If a Tour Group (Valley Prep) cancels the Tour forty-five (45) days or less prior to the scheduled Tour Date, the Tour Group shall be responsible for 100% of the tour cost as provided pursuant to the Tour Contract governing the Tour.

B. HEMISPHERE CANCELLATION

- a. Hemisphere may cancel a Tour by reason of any event or occurrence which it deems to create a concern for travel safety, or if any major component of a Tour (i.e., transportation or accommodations) shall be canceled as a result of any such event. In such event, Hemisphere's sole liability to Participant shall be to refund to Participant such amount as Hemisphere receives as a refund from its vendors applicable to Participant's participation in the Tour, less such

administrative fee as it deems necessary to cover Hemisphere's costs to the date of such cancellation in connection with such Tour.

C. PARTICIPANT CANCELLATION

a. If a Participant shall cancel his or her reservation forty-five (45) days or less prior to the scheduled Tour Date, the Participant shall be responsible for 100% of the tour cost as provided pursuant to the Tour Contract governing the Tour.

IF YOU PURCHASED OPTIONAL TRAVEL PROTECTION:

"The Group Deluxe Plan" with "Cancel For Any Reason" (CFAR) was available for an additional cost. Refer to your Plan Document for complete plan details and benefits. Plans offered benefits for Trip Cancellation/Interruption and more. CFAR coverage is 75% of the nonrefundable trip cost. Trip cancellation must be 48 hours or more prior to schedule departure. CFAR must be purchased at the time of plan purchase and with, or before your final payment.