



Mount St Mary's Catholic High School

Ellerby Road, Leeds, LS9 8LA
T - 0113 2455248
E - thehub@mountstmarys.org
www.mountstmarys.org

Headteacher:
Mr M Cooper MEd

Dear School Leader

My name is Naemi Asmerom, and I am a student at Mount St Mary's Catholic High School, soon to be starting in Year 9. I could give you more information about me and tell you that I am a high achieving student with perfect behavioural records and not a single detention, but then I would be drifting away from the subject of this email; not knowing me personally is not important, for there are more concerning topics at hand.

I understand that you are probably very busy right now, with schools reopening for the new term and such, so I'll get straight to the point and not beat around the bush.

I suspect you have heard about the recent yet major changes in Afghanistan and the sudden Taliban take-over of the country. The Taliban has promised that women will be respected within the laws of Islam and that they do not seek revenge. But no true promise can be made by those who steal land with guns and artillery, for it is no longer a promise, but a bogus endeavour to subdue the concerns about their rule. For it is no longer a promise, but a tactic to steer the peering eyes, anxious about the safety of Afghans, away from their direction. For it is no longer a promise, but a bright light used to blind us from all the bloodshed and terror soon to follow.

I expect that you have seen the viral videos of men clinging to the wheels of aeroplanes, desperate to leave their once beloved homeland, which they claimed with pride. Desperate to leave the homeland whose soil stains red, whose lakes flow rouge and whose land has become but a battleground for violence and massacres. Anyone who watched that video felt not pity, not sympathy but a pang of great sadness, which we can never truly experience from the safety of our homes but grow to understand and acknowledge.

But let me tell you, personal sadness, is useless and selfish in times of great urgency and misfortune. It does nothing but pull at the heartstrings and does nothing to help the innocent victims in need of aid. We need more than pity, more than sympathy and more than sadness to change the fate of the millions of lives in jeopardy. What we need are actions. Actions are what will rewrite destinies, what will change futures, and what will make history.

Over the past few coming days, I have come into contact with a charity called Aid Afghanistan for Education, which specialises in giving women and children education. Most importantly, they specialise in educating girls, so that they can live as students and not pawns in a war beyond their years so that they can live as children and not brides so that they can live in knowledge and not marriage. So that girls can escape the shadows they have been bound to for so long, and live-in broad daylight, and fulfil their potential. So that they can experience the same pain of waking up every day at ungodly hours of the day, to finish off homework they left till the last minute that we

do. So that they can feel the same weight of a bag on their backs and a uniform on their bodies as they make their way to school as we do. So that they can feel the same ache in their hands after writing long essays, the same dread when a maths test drops on their lap and the same panic when a teacher catches them talking, the same feeling of being a student. That feeling should not come with a price. That feeling should not be a luxury. That feeling should be guaranteed, from the very second, you enter this world.

Now, to ensure such a feeling to the thousands and thousands of children in Afghanistan, I need your help and I need your support. With the organisation, we have discussed an idea, in which pupils at school could bring in stationary and learning equipment, whether it be a pencil, sheets of paper, a notebook or even a ruler. If each person made a small contribution, then the impact on Afghanistan's children would be phenomenal, but I wish to expand this plan and get schools all around Leeds involved. I have already asked my teachers, and they have agreed to launch the idea to pupils here at Mount St Mary's, but we cannot do this alone. I implore you to join us in giving girls a future beyond the sands of a war-torn country and hope for brighter days ahead. Hopefully, schools across Leeds both primary and high school can donate some equipment; with rewards given to those who do. Together we can turn a fantasy, where there are pens and pencils galore, where there are words that run wild and maps which show off the world. Together we can fight the odds not with guns, not with artillery or violence, but with the greatest gifts of all: pens and pencils. Together, we can show solidarity, in the face of humanitarian adversary, and fight, not as individuals, but a whole community of pupils and teachers, so that we can see more Afghan women on billboards, and on news screens: claiming success with open arms and thriving in the beauty of knowledge. All that I need is your aid.

I look forward to discussing this further.

Yours Sincerely,

Naemi Asmerom