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The Rt Hon Rachel Reeves MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer
HM Treasury
1 Horse Guards Road
London SW1A 2AB

Friday, September 13th

Dear Chancellor,

I am writing to you as President of the Parents' Association of the Lycée Français Charles de Gaulle in London, to express parents' concerns about the proposal to introduce VAT on tuition fees for private schools, and to draw your attention to the consequences that this measure could have on our families and our school, should it be applied here.

The Lycée Français Charles de Gaulle, an establishment managed directly by the French State via the Agency for Teaching French Abroad (AEFE), plays a vital role for the French and French-speaking communities in the United Kingdom. It allows its pupils to follow courses that comply with the requirements of the French Ministry of National Education, thus providing essential academic continuity for families living abroad. It is important to note that these specific programmes, including preparation for French qualifications such as the brevet and the baccalaureate, are not available in British state schools. This means that parents have no choice but to turn to an establishment such as the Lycée Français Charles de Gaulle in order to ensure their children receive an education that complies with the French system.

The introduction of VAT on tuition fees at an institution such as ours would have a disastrous financial impact on our families. Such an increase in costs would force many parents to withdraw their children from our school, not by choice, but because of insurmountable financial difficulties. We draw your attention to the fact that already, due to the significant increase in the cost of living in the UK, more and more families are approaching our organisation's charity wing, LFCG Families Charity Fund, for financial help and this number would inevitably increase as we add to this those relying



already on partial scholarships who would not be able to afford this additional 20%. As an aside, the charity – which exists just to help families with financial difficulties to meet their schooling costs – may also be directly impacted by any VAT imposition.

These families would therefore find themselves unable to pay school fees and be forced to consider returning to France to ensure their children can continue their education in French public institutions. The only alternative would be to jeopardize their education by switching them late to the British education system which is unfamiliar to them, with academic deadlines that they may have missed already such as preparing for the Common Entrance Exam, GCSEs and A Levels.

We understand the economic stakes underlying such tax reforms, but we hope that the uniqueness of our institution, as well as the lack of British state-run alternatives, will be taken into account. It would be regrettable if this measure forced families to leave the United Kingdom or to give up the education they want for their children, in addition to jeopardizing the financial health of the Lycée Français Charles de Gaulle.

In the interest of the educational and cultural diversity that enriches British society to which our community – and indeed London as a whole – is deeply attached, we hope that you will consider the difficulties that this VAT proposal would impose on our institution and our families.

We remain at your disposal to discuss these issues and sincerely hope that this reflection will lead to a balanced and fair solution for all parties concerned.

Please accept, Madam, Sir, the expression of my highest consideration.

Yours faithfully,

Karen Barges

President of the Parents' Association of the Lycée Français Charles de Gaulle in London for the APL Committee