



Dear Parents,

I trust this finds you well and I hope that your children are looking forward to the prospect of returning to school. I am sending this letter to all parents, though please note that the information below primarily relates to the Senior School and, as such, this is for Junior School parents' information only.

This letter includes headline information for the reopening of the Senior School; there will be more detail to share next week about the logistics. I have also included below some top-line information from yesterday's announcement about Teacher Assessed Grades for Y11 and Y13 students and details about a special event for the whole of Senior School this coming week.

Student wellbeing

In all of this I am very conscious of the need to support children's wellbeing as we continue to navigate the uncertainties of the evolving situation. Ahead of the students returning to school, we will once again be sending out formal wellbeing surveys towards the end of next week. This will be sent out by each student's Head of Year, and we encourage all students to respond and share, privately, how they are feeling about returning to school and how they are coping with the on-going situation. If you have any observations or concerns about how your child is coping, then please do contact their Form Supervisor and let them know.

Return schedule and testing

Senior School students' return times are affected by the need for us to offer Lateral Flow Covid-19 tests and, although these are optional, we encourage all to engage with this initiative. Students need to have a total of three tests (with a gap of three to five days between each) and the first of these must take place around their initial arrival back in school.

While we have debated the feasibility of testing students before the 8th the sheer volume of students to be tested poses a particular logistical challenge for a school the size of RGS and I am also conscious of minimising disruption to teaching. As such testing will **begin on Monday 8th March**, and we expect all students to have completed their first test and be back into school **by the close of Tuesday 9th of March**. The arrival date/time for each year group is outlined below:

Year	Arrive at school	Testing then into classrooms
Y13	Monday 8 th March	From 9.00am
Y11	Monday 8 th March	From 10.30am
Y12	Monday 8 th March	From 1.00pm
Y10	Monday 8 th March	From 1.30pm
Y7	Tuesday 9 th March	From 9.00am
Y8	Tuesday 9 th March	From 10.30am
Y9	Tuesday 9 th March	From 1.00pm

Please note that students will be asked to arrive by Form group to minimise social contact until the outcome of the initial test is known (further details to follow on this). We appreciate that these arrangements will be challenging for families and particularly for those who have children in different year groups who may end up having to make multiple journeys into school. If that is too difficult you, for example if you live a long way from school, can we please ask that you arrive for latest time specified for your children.

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Remote learning will continue for all students right up until the time they are due to come into school and as soon as the student has received a negative result they will go straight to their classrooms, with face to face lessons commencing as soon as possible after this time. School life will then operate with measures in place very similar to those applied in the Autumn Term. The main change in the guidance is that, at least until Easter, face coverings should now be worn in lessons where social distancing cannot be achieved. We recognise that this may prove challenging for some and exemptions will be allowed but the experience of schools in other countries is that this quickly becomes the norm. With this in mind, we advise that you please prepare to equip each child with a number of face coverings to bring into school each day so that they can regularly change these. Spending some time talking with them about how best to do this safely would be appreciated too; for example, how to store used face coverings in a plastic bag so that they do not contaminate other possessions and making sure that hands are washed or sanitised between changing.

If you (or your child if aged 16 or over) have not yet completed the testing consent form, please do so in advance [here](#) as the logistics of the whole process follow from this. After the initial three tests taken in school, weekly Lateral Flow Covid-19 tests will be offered to all Senior School students for use at home, and we will provide more information about this in due course.

U6 students will be returning to internal exams and should be aware of the timings of their papers. These will start on Monday 8th March in the afternoon and continue until the end of Monday 15th. Exams will all be in the Sports Hall and students are only required to be in school for when they have an exam. They are welcome to come in at other times if they wish to revise quietly or to see any teachers they make specific arrangements with. Those not in exams on Monday 15th are expected back in normal lessons.

Arrangements for Y11 students, who will be in internal exams from Monday 15th, will be sent separately but they will similarly only be expected in school when they have an exam.

Keyworkers

We will be sending out a Form on Wednesday to gauge demand for keyworkers' childcare which we will still be providing for Y7, Y8, and Y9 on Monday 8th March, and also for the morning of Tuesday ahead of their test times.

Exams

Y11 and Y13 parents are already aware that Ofqual have recently announced the outcome of their consultation and that grades this summer will be awarded by teachers using evidence they have of student performance. This will come from a range of assessments that have been carried out including coursework (whether fully completed or not) together with internal exams, in-class tests, exam board-provided papers and certain homework assignments. We are expecting further guidance from the exam boards themselves on how these assessments are to be used at the end of March. After the internal exams we will continue to teach and assess as we would usually do, covering as much subject content as we need to ensure that students are prepared for the next stage of their education while giving them plenty of opportunities to show us what they are capable of in the meantime. No single exam or assessment will solely be used to derive a grade.

E-scooters

I am sure parents in Newcastle will have spotted the appearance of new orange e-scooters around the city in the last week. We are, of course, supportive of such environmentally friendly forms of travel. However, some RGS students have already been spotted on the scooters which are only meant for those over 18 and I would simply encourage parents to talk at home about the rules relating to their use and safety implications.



Guest speaker

Finally, I want to let parents know that we have a guest speaker who will be addressing the whole Senior School from 0850 on the morning of Wednesday 3rd March in an extended assembly. The speaker is Chris Lubbe who served as a close aide to Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu, FW De Klerk and Colin La Foy and he speaks informatively and passionately about South Africa's journey from apartheid to democracy and his lifelong work to end discrimination. Parents are also welcome to listen to this event alongside your children which will be available [here](#) though any questions afterwards should come from the children.

In the meantime, I wish you a restful weekend, as we count down the days until we see our young people in person back in school!

Best wishes,

Geoffrey Stanford
Headmaster