

Dear Parents,

I hope that this email finds you well.

First of all, I would like to reiterate how delighted we are to be welcoming students back on site from next week. While I am immensely proud of the staff for their tireless and innovative efforts to engage the students in remote learning, the community does not have the same atmosphere without us all being together. I hope they are looking forward to returning as much as we are, please do remind them to look at my welcome back video message available here. I should also note that I am very grateful to the volunteers who are supporting our lateral flow testing; please remind your children to thank these, mostly parents, who are donating their time to help everyone get back to class as quickly as possible.

Looking back to this week, Senior School students, staff and, I hope, many parents were fortunate to hear an inspirational talk given by Chris Lubbe. Having served as a close aide to Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu, FW De Klerk and Colin La Foy, he spoke informatively and passionately about South Africa's journey from apartheid to democracy and his lifelong work to end discrimination. Thank you to those of you who have contacted us with your own reflections about what the talk meant to you and your child. For those who have not seen it, your child has access to the recording of the event via the Student Hub on Teams. I am also keen to build on this to deliver a programme of similarly inspirational assemblies at least 2termly and I am grateful for all suggestions you may have about suitable topics or speakers.

Social distancing reminder

Looking ahead to next week, I know that you have received significant logistical briefings from Mr Keenan so I will not labour all of the detail already covered. I would like to clarify a key point on which we have received some queries; students must NOT arrive before their allocated time. This has been very carefully scheduled to manage a socially distanced flow while they wait for tests and then progress to classes.

Another point, I would be grateful if parents could helpfully remind students that the social distancing rules in place in Autumn, still apply. If we have a confirmed case in school, those identified as 'close contacts' will still need to isolate, even with lateral flow testing in place. It would be so disappointing, having just returned, for any student to need to isolate again. Students can help to avoid this scenario through their thoughtful behaviour.

Reporting absences

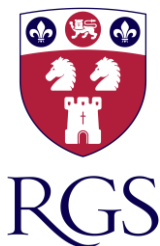
Given that pupils have been out of school for a while it is perhaps worth me reminding parents of the process for reporting student absences:

Junior School

- Please contact the school each day your son/daughter is absent through illness.
- On the first day of absence, please call 0191 281 8955 before 9am, giving their name, form and reason for absence.
- If they are to be absent for a second day or longer, please keep us informed by phoning the number above on each morning of the absence, or by emailing a.gravelly@rgs.newcastle.sch.uk or a.noble@rgs.newcastle.sch.uk

Senior School

Royal Grammar School, Eskdale Terrace, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 4DX
T: 0191 281 5711 E: communications@rgs.newcastle.sch.uk www.rgs.newcastle.sch.uk



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- On the first day of absence, please call 0191 281 5711 before 9am, giving their name, form and reason for absence.
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Co-curricular activities

We hope your children, and indeed yourselves, have enjoyed participating in the co-curricular activities and challenges we have provided so far over the Spring Term. This weekend, the PE Department have invited students to take part in a final virtual fixture against two other RGS schools, RGS Guildford and RGS Colchester. All the information is on the Student Hub and I would like to encourage as many students to get involved as possible.

There is still also time for students to submit their entries for the House Drama Competition, with entries being accepted until the end of March 8th. There have been some wonderful productions already sent in by students which we plan to share at the end of the month to celebrate World Poetry Day and World Theatre Day.

Parents also have time to get involved in Mrs Clappison's Wake Me Up! RGS choir project in conjunction with Children's Mental Health Week, which has a deadline of March 8th.

Please also do take the opportunity to listen to the Spring Recital at 6pm tonight, which can be found here.

Threadaware – second hand uniform

I suspect it is highly likely that some children will have grown since we last saw them in school. If your child has outgrown any items of school uniform, I politely ask that you consider donating them to the School's Threadaware scheme. Money raised from the sale of all items goes towards the RGS Bursary Campaign. To donate items, please ensure they are clean and unmarked and placed in a bag marked Threadaware. There is a donation point at the Main Reception, as well as the Junior School receptions in both Lambton and Brandling House.

Staff appointment

I would like parents to know that following a change in structure we have appointed Laura Foad as Head of Marketing and Communications. Laura has been at the RGS for almost two years in a temporary capacity and now joins us on a permanent basis.

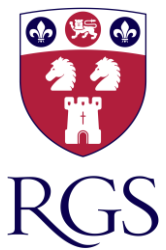
Laura will now manage the communications@rgs.newcastle.sch.uk email address and I am confident that parents will appreciate Laura's efficiency! Related to this, I would encourage all parents to follow our social media channels; there is so much happening across our community and it's a great way of staying informed on a daily basis. Check us out on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn.

And finally, I wish you an enjoyable weekend and look forward to seeing your children in school after the weekend!

Best wishes

Geoffrey Stanford
Headmaster

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