

HEADMASTER'S LETTER

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

16 March 2020

Dear Parent

Having travelled to London, as many of you do daily, on Friday morning in the rush hour I was surprised and perturbed (in equal measure) to easily park at the station, to get a seat on the 07:30 train, on the tube and to casually walk to my meeting in the deserted streets of Mayfair. Such is the nature of a 'once in a generation' event and a crisis on an international scale.

We seek to be controlled, considered and compassionate as we pull together, as a community, in these unprecedented times. Our top priority is to keep our employees, boys and stakeholders safe whilst doing what we can to keep RGS providing the best education we can.

CONTROLLED

The situation is changing by the day though the Government is, thus far, resisting significant pressure to advise schools to close.

- We, at RGS, are now moving apace in ensuring that our community is better protected and able to deal with whatever the situation throws at us. We seek to work together – staff, boys and their families. We are here to support the boys in their education over the coming weeks.
- To ensure that we can operate effectively, in the event of a school closure, we are conducting a trial day on Thursday 19 March. Mrs Forster will send out a more detailed information letter about this, but this is advanced notice that we will be asking Years 9-13, inclusive, to stay at home and be taught through a range of online methods following the rhythm of the school day. Years 7 and 8 should come to school – we feel that this may avoid unnecessary childcare arrangements.
- There is a management group meeting daily to work through solutions to issues as they arise. There are regular updates to staff within the school.
- We already have staff who are self-isolating for seven days - we will do all we can to keep learning going in those classes. A lot of cover is required; some of our 'go-to' cover staff are retired teachers and are, understandably, less keen to undertake this work at present.
- As I said on Friday, the concern about public examinations is understandable. Ofqual (the regulatory body for the examination boards) are being somewhat vague but have publicly stated that they are working with the boards to have contingency measures in place. I'll keep you informed but, in the meantime, you may like to see what they have [written](#).

COMPASSIONATE

- Please put the health of your son first – keep them at home if they have a new, persistent cough or temperature.
- We will take immediate steps if any of our boys or staff fall ill and will do our best to support your son through this situation.
- May I advise that you encourage your son to heed only the advice from PHE and, in the case of educational matters, the School. We all know that, whilst the internet is a fantastic resource, there is much 'fake news', scaremongering and mischief-making which can alarm young people as well as creating unnecessary tension at an already tricky time. Please be responsible in your own use of social media.

CONSIDERED

- We will continue to communicate by InTouch, twice weekly for the time being
- @RGSHWHeadmaster is the main school twitter account
- There will be regular updates on the school website www.rgshw.com
- Sports fixtures will be updated on @RGSHWSport
- The Director of Boarding will communicate directly with boarding families on specific boarding matters.
- Whilst we will continue to take registers and chase up absences, we are going to suspend the attendance module of the SIMS app. This is so that there is no percentage or targets to concern boys or parents. Please continue to report absences through attendance@rgshw.com

POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS (we will continue to update):

- Sportsman's Dinner POSTPONED to 1 October
- Year 10 Parents' Evening POSTPONED
- Rugby tour meeting tonight POSTPONED
- Japan trip meeting STILL TAKING PLACE at the time of writing
- Year 7 Elevate Education Workshop & Parental Seminar CANCELLED

As ever, I thank you all for your continued support.

Philip Wayne