

20/04/2020

Dear Gentlemen (and Parents)

The importance of the Ethos of Learning Summary during the lockdown

At the time of writing I am currently in the middle of a period of self-isolation having started to present with symptoms of C19. If I am honest, I feel pretty awful, incredibly feverish and completely exhausted. However, I recognise I am very fortunate to be in my younger years (generous, I know) and hope I am through the worst. Of course, there are some positives, I've retired from the never-ending job list my wife presents me with each morning. I have not cooked or cleared away a meal for 3 days, I've done no washing and no childcare! I must confess, I am missing it all.

Being bedridden has allowed me to get a huge amount of work done, I tend to work in 90-minute bursts before needing a rest. I have been completing my Ethos of Learning Newsletters which will be shared throughout the rest of the year (contain your excitement, lads!). Upon completion I **reflected** on the fact that these skills might be more useful than ever during this period.

During the term time you will have faced huge **challenges** in adapting to remote learning, you will have been regularly **problem solving** as you wrestled with technology and the uploading and accessing of work. You may well have adapted your routines to cater for parental work commitments and sibling rivalry for devices in order to access the work. This will no doubt have required great **empathy, communication** and **co-operation**. Along with a touch of shouting, hint of wrestling and the odd "Ctrl, Alt, Delete"!

Focus without the structure of the school day and the rigorous enforcement of a timetable has meant that you have had to be more **responsible** for your own learning. We talk about creating **independent learners** by the time you leave in Year 13, but we demand it now. I am continually impressed by the number of pupils attending lessons online and the quality of work submitted.

Outside the virtual classroom, you will need to be using your **initiative** to make productive use of the time offered by the lockdown. What have you done or what are you intending to do? Will you learn a new skill? Develop an existing **passion** further? Living in close proximity for long periods of time will bring challenges, we need to **respect** one another, appreciate that family members will have good days and bad days. We need to be there for one another, we need to be **empathetic**, we need to be kind.

Some of you will sadly experience the real sharp end of the virus, you will need **courage** and support from your nearest and dearest. You need to look after your wellbeing and talk to others if you are struggling. Mr Zair is putting together some great resources on Teams to support you during this time. I would urge you to take a look.

In addition we are able to offer a limited number of phone call counselling/support sessions with our school counsellors. It is unlikely that a student could talk to the same counsellor for more than a limited number of weeks but this will depend on the number of requests and availability. This opportunity is open to all RGS students and if this is something you are interested in please contact Mrs Booth

(dcb@rgshw.com) and Mrs Herath (szh@rgshw.com); obviously such requests will be dealt with confidentially.

There is talk in the press today about a return to school sooner than the potential September date. This would be great for many parents, teachers, pupils and the economy. There will be lots of parents worried about the education their child might be missing out on, but rather than thinking about what you are missing out on, what about what you are gaining? Will you be the generation who are better connected with your family, who are more comfortable in your own skin, who can create games out of nothing, who take greater responsibility for your learning and yourself? Will you be the generation who could all work household appliances before you go to university, who can all cook, clean and sew? The generation who understand the importance of communication, the generation who realise that life is precious so make the most of it, the generation who really appreciate the world around us so want to protect it? Maybe your generation could change the way we think about education, perhaps you are the game changers. The silver lining to these next few tough months might be more significant than we think.

I am missing you all. Please keep safe and continue to always do the right thing, whatever the situation.