

31st March 2020

Dear Gentlemen (and parents),

What a strange week it has been. I must confess it has been tricky to adjust to this new situation. For me, it has taken multi-tasking to a whole new level! I flit between teaching interactive Year 10 lessons, to helping my three children with numeracy and literacy, before disappearing off for a Senior Team meeting on Zoom, throw in breakfast, lunch and dinner, afternoon arts and crafts, a splash of PE, a dash of cookery and I'm done for!

You and your family will all be juggling as above and more. It is important to remember you can only do your best during these times. I know you are all striving to be online for your lessons and I certainly encourage this, but we also appreciate that is not always possible as devices and usage need to be shared across a family. Similarly, your teachers can't always be available for interactive lessons, as many are also caring for younger or older members of their household. That said, tasks should always be set, and you should do your very best to meet the deadlines set by your staff, we need to do our best to keep expectations and standards high.

I have been incredibly touched by the number of parents who have been in touch to express their thanks for the hard work that the staff are putting into this new way of learning. These are still early days and we are learning more every day to ensure we give you the best possible experience. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you for the maturity you have demonstrated during this time. Our aim at RGS is to turn you into independent learners by the time you leave us for the next stage of your education, yet this situation has forced you all to take some serious responsibility for your learning at a very young age. You are rising to this challenge. Some of the work I have seen submitted has been incredibly impressive. Please share with your parents the work you are being set on Teams. I think they will be impressed with the work you are covering.

I hope you are using this time to support your nearest and dearest. I'm sure you're being helpful, loading the dishwasher, keeping your room tidy, helping in the garden and even talking to your parents with more than a one-word answer! I must admit that I am enjoying this extra time with my family, but when I realised the clocks changed and I had an hour less with them there were mixed emotions!

Over Easter, you may find you have more time on your hands in a confined space. How can you make the most of this time? Will you learn a new language? Become amazing on guitar? Focus on your creative skills? I've decided to keep a diary, partly because we are living in an unprecedented time and I want to keep a record but I also want to keep the memory of this very rare opportunity to spend time with my young family, it includes the highs and lows of family life. Here's a little extract from Friday:

"Today I tried to deliver my first set of interactive lessons. Thankfully my wife was not required in work today, so when 10.30am arrived, I left her with the three children in what can only be described as a bomb site of a kitchen to sneak upstairs to the office to begin logging on. As I left, I heard cries of, "Where's he going? I haven't finished my Maths yet! He can't just leave!" The latter comment was from my wife. Anyway, I logged in, ridiculously excited to try out the new technology, see my students and even more excited to know I had 30 minutes rest from the kitchen."

Working from home is new for many of us. I urge you to keep a routine, be up and ready for the usual school day. Strive to complete the work set and meet those deadlines, aim to impress and give of your best. Be kind to those around you and you will no doubt reap the rewards.

We are all in this together. Let's have a productive week and then a well-deserved Easter Holiday. We hope to hear from Ofqual in the coming days and the Headmaster will share his thoughts with Year 11 and Year 13 once the announcement has been made. In the meantime, continue to work hard.

Alex Wallace
Deputy Head