

## HEADMASTER'S LETTER

29 April 2020

Dear Parent

I am sure that the mainly wonderful weather has made the lockdown at least more bearable if not a pleasure, for many.

I have found time over the last couple of weekends to get back on my bike. A round trip, from my home to and from Chequers is a little over ten miles which suits me well and gives me a couple of hills to tackle en route. I could not help but think of the Prime Minister as I turned round by the lodge, learning on my return that he was due to return to work on Monday. Boris Johnson's morning briefing, this week, reminded us that there was still no clear indication as to when the lockdown would end. This means that, despite the speculation, we still do not know when and how we will return. Whilst we await direction from the Government, we continue to focus on the provision of a thorough, innovative and enjoyable learning experience for your sons. However, please be assured we are actively planning for, for example, a return to School after half-term; whatever guidance is forthcoming will be met with considered, strong leadership from RGS staff.

### FEEDBACK, THE GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING

We have been very pleased to receive your feedback both positive and where you feel things could make life easier. As a part of the feedback loop, we are going to start a series of surveys for both parents and boys. The surveys will be targeted, rather than universal, as we are keen to get indicative responses to help us plan for the next few weeks. Your support in providing helpful, honest feedback would be appreciated.

### HELPING OTHERS

We have been very pleased to donate goggles and lab coats to local hospitals. Mr Marshall (Subject Leader for DT), who received a 3D printer from a group of Sixth Formers and parents as a leaving gift, has been manufacturing PPE for care homes in Marlow. We have offered a section of our boarding facilities to the NHS for key workers and it's possible that we will be hosting some newly qualified doctors until we return.

With all the clapping for NHS staff, the lauds to the education system, transport and supermarket staff (all thoroughly deserved), I am conscious that this is a very tough time for parents who are juggling parenthood, work and being a surrogate cover teacher during the day. We are aware that the lack of the usual routine will affect attitude to work, getting up, etc. Please do look after yourselves and remember that you, like the School, can only do your best in difficult times. If we can help in any way, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

### #LearnAtHome

May I take this opportunity to thank you all, once again, for a great team effort between staff, boys and parents to ensure the continued development of #LearnAtHome. I have heard very good reports of levels of engagement, tough though it is for some families.

You will have noted that there will be some teaching by video on Teams from this week following some useful trials. As per Mr Wallace's letter, it is at the teacher's discretion as to whether they use Teams in this way - teachers have a range of technological skills and a range of home circumstances, which either support or hinder a live experience. Variety, also, is good.

You may have read in the press that levels of engagement among the national student population, particularly in the state sector, is worryingly low. RGS seems to be bucking this trend and I would urge us all to 'keep on it' so that our boys do not decline into the 'left behind' category. You may find this [report](#) from the Sutton Trust of interest.

Please be assured of our support in ensuring that all boys are given the chance of keeping up for now, and in making up for lost time, particularly in Years 10 and 12, which, I know, are the year groups of greatest governmental concern.

## RESOURCES

In addition to our own provision, you may find the following links useful:

- The [Oak National Academy](#) is a website set up to offer online teaching and learning resources.
- **Elevate** is an award-winning organisation that has been working with our school for a number of years to help your child become a more effective learner. They are hosting an exclusive webinar for parents at schools that they work with across the UK to show how you can help your child study most effectively. *Details of the event are as follows:*

*Title: How to help your child study effectively without becoming the enemy Date: Tuesday 12th May 2020 Time: 6:00 – 7:00pm Cost: Free Here is the [link](#).*

Year 12 may be particularly interested in two of the UCAS links, which are designed to support the preparation to university. The links are [here](#) and [here](#).



### [Chat to students | UCAS](#)

Alternatives to uni. Not sure if uni or college is for you? Find out what else you can do. Search for apprenticeships and jobs

[www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)

## READ, MARK, LEARN AND INWARDLY DIGEST

There was a considerable amount of information dispatched last week, (I will not repeat it all here) so I would ask you to check emails regularly. All letters are posted on the School website, too, which can be found by clicking [here](#).

In brief, there was information about:

- the decision not to hold 'End of Year' exams for Years 7-10 this summer (we wish to focus on catching up, though there will clearly need to be forms of assessment);
- UCAS exams in September and predicted grades, information for Oxbridge/'Medics, Dentists and Vets' and Year 13 mocks. ; and
- the plans for the remainder of this half term for all year groups.

## THIS WEEK

There will be further communications from Mr Wallace regarding:

- Inspiration Week for Years 7-9
- EtonX courses and the proposed A Level preparation work for Year 11
- EtonX and MOOCS courses for our departing Year 13, which should be a useful preparation for university.
- Invitations to complete parent and student surveys
- One of my video messages!

## FINALLY

We love hearing stories and receiving photos, even videos, about the effort your sons are putting in to their work - the making of a garden planter, a bird box, piano lessons by Skype, written exercises, new ways of playing hockey have delighted us in the last few weeks. Please do keep them coming and I will put them on our Twitter account @RGSHW

With my thanks for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

**Philip Wayne**  
Headmaster