

Dear Parents / Carers

It seems remarkable to think we are now into the last three week of the school year, and that the 'holiday' period isn't far off. There remain areas of huge uncertainty, all of which will hopefully be overcome sooner rather than later. For example the DfE have announced funding for schools to use for 'catch up' work to be done, which is good news, although any detail of amounts and the ways in which it must be spent are still to come. Quite how the educational landscape both nationally and at RHSC takes shape over the next school year I am looking forward to finding out. What I think I can say with confidence is that it will be different from what we are used to.

September

You will be wondering what our plans are for returning to school in September. The government has announced they want all pupils back in on a full-time basis, and when I first read that I was really pleased and very relieved. However, since then I have been waiting for clear guidance on how that should happen, and at this point am not filled with confidence in what guidance there has been. As is often the case, the guidance seems to suit city schools and disregard the fact there are such things as rural schools. For example, quite how we would be expected to stagger the start times for different year groups I have no idea, considering approximately 700 of our student body arrives at school in a coach. My view is that whilst any sort of social distancing exists, it will be hard to have the normal number of pupils in a classroom in any year in the high school, and in many classes in the College. A reduction to a distance of 1 metre would help, but would still limit most classes to approximately 2/3 their normal size. There is also some uncertainty about the curriculum we should offer once back, with suggestions we should focus largely on the core subjects rather than the usual broader curriculum. If and how that is done remains to be seen, but any narrowing of the curriculum is not something we would willingly support.

We will wait for clear guidance and then do all we can to welcome back as many pupils as we possibly can within any constraints imposed, and will keep you fully up to date. What we can say confidently is that we will make whatever plans are necessary and keep you as up to date as we can; I would be incredibly disappointed if we cannot welcome all of our young people back, at least on a part time basis. So, please continue to check your emails and please be reminded that all communications are placed on the school website.

Year 8 options

Thank you to all of you who helped, as this became an online process. We will be contacting everyone soon to let you know what options your children have. In the vast majority of

cases pupils will be able to study their first choice subjects, although be aware that some will be asked to study what they identified as their second choice, due to staffing limitations.

Results days

All Year 11 and 13 students have received an email from school asking them to create their own account on Go4Schools by today, as this is how they will be receiving their GCSE & A Level results this year. Please tell them to do it now if they have not yet done so!

Face to face support sessions

I am really pleased that those pupils in Year 10 who decided to attend these sessions seem to have found them really beneficial. Other schools I am aware of have found attendance at these has at times dropped off, but this has not been the case at RHSC. Although these were communicated as being planned for four weeks initially, I can confirm that they will continue for a fifth week, which will be the last week of term. It has also been a pleasure to see Year12 students back in the College, albeit in small numbers.

Online working

This has been the first week our staff have been using a new format to present work and instructions to pupils, in an attempt to become more consistent and more easily understood. As I have said previously, when we shut in March we were making plans for a shorter period of closure than this has turned out to be. Should we need to, we can carry on using the new format in September. I also hope that, if still needed in the new term, you and your children will notice a shift towards more varied lesson material.

Yours sincerely

Tim Gibbs