



Re-founded 1555

Ripon Grammar School

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13 March 2020

Dear Parents

I am writing to give you an update on the school's current position with regards to on-going COVID-19 situation. Ongoing updates will be communicated as soon as possible if the public situation changes.

The current situation

We continue to follow the latest advice on a daily basis. As of yesterday the government's position and that of Public health England [PHE] is that schools should remain open. Even if a case of the virus is confirmed within the school community that would not necessarily lead to closure. Any closure of the school therefore will only be undertaken on the advice of PHE.

As a school we will continue to impress on students the importance of good basic hygiene, especially hand washing. We are ensuring that soap dispensers are regularly inspected and topped up. Other high contact areas such as door handles are being cleaned on a regular basis with disinfectant. Hand sanitisers are currently unavailable due to low stock. At present, normal school activities such as sports matches and parents evenings etc. will continue until advice suggests otherwise. Further information concerning overseas trips, such as the trip to Greece at half term, will be communicated separately to those parents concerned. Some UK trips may be cancelled or postponed subject to individual assessment and again affected students and parents would be informed.

Further information on what to do if you or your son/daughter suspects they are affected can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-people-with-confirmed-or-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

School Closure

If the school were to close we have a contingency plan in place but this is inevitably subject to change and refinement. Assuming that staff are fit and well to work from home, the expectation would be to provide some form of meaningful and appropriate work to be set for all classes via the online Office 365 Platform. Priority, understandably, would be given to examination classes in Years 13, 11, 12 and plenty of past paper work would be set. Work for students in Years 7-10 might be of a more extended project-based nature. It is therefore important that all students know and understand how to access and check for work in Office 365 departmental areas. Direct communication with groups will also be effected through Microsoft Teams or email. Exam classes may want to communicate with teachers via email and this would be appropriate although with an acceptance that an instant reply might be difficult.

In most cases work would be expected to be handed in on return to school, but teachers would endeavour to mark and return work where possible for examination classes during the period of closure, at least until study leave begins. If a member of staff becomes unwell the school may contact classes dependent on the situation and level of need.

As you can appreciate, it is difficult to prepare fully for such an eventuality and I am keen for teaching to staff to prioritise their normal in-school planning, preparation and marking. Most exam classes will already have revision notes and resources as well as past papers to work through.

Public Examinations

In the case of public examinations the current Ofqual advice is that students should assume that the current schedule and events remains in place. There is little that we can do as yet to plan for any form of disruption. Our priority would be to ensure that the examination hall is clean after each session and that there are sufficient invigilators and exam officers able to administer examinations. We have reiterated this message to reassure students that all will be well and measures will be implemented if required. Special Consideration in the case of illness would be applied according to current guidelines.

Boarding Community

In the case of a suspected or actual infection of one of our boarding community, we are unable to provide facilities for isolation within the school and, as in the case of school closure which would necessitate closure of the boarding houses, our expectation is that boarders return to parental homes or their registered guardian in the UK.

On-going routines

In the meantime, I would be grateful if you could continue to keep school fully informed concerning student absence. absence@ripogrammar.com Please also check that we have current and correct contact details through the My Child at School portal and inform school as soon as possible if there is an error. If there any issues accessing Office 365 or receiving email please do let school know.

It is clear that this is a fluid situation and if there are further government updates we will appraise our current contingency planning and communicate with you accordingly. We will endeavour, as best we can, to maintain an educational service to our students while protecting their health and wellbeing.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J M Webb', with a horizontal line underneath.

Jonathan M Webb
Headmaster

