



Re-founded 1555

Ripon Grammar School

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12 February 2021

Dear Parents

Half term is almost upon us and all the students and staff are due a well-earned break. We are all immensely proud of how RGS students have coped with the demands of remote learning over the last 6 weeks. I do hope that all have managed to keep up to date as best as they can and make good progress with their education. We all know that this has been a stressful time, and that there really is no substitute for children being back in the classroom. We remain ever hopeful, with a watchful eye on the Coronavirus infection rate, that school can restart as soon as possible after half term.

I would like to say a big thank you to all members of the RGS community who have worked incredibly hard to maintain a sense of normality this term, both in teaching and supporting students and in the day to day running of the school. The results of the parent and student feedback survey were very positive and supportive of the mix of live lessons and set work and the feedback provided by the school. It is encouraging to get this response. Inevitably there will always be variations in delivery and in different student experiences. Lockdown has been harder for some than for others. We are all concerned about academic progress and what the future holds, not least for the Year 11s and 13s who will be waiting for further clarity from Ofqual as to what the assessment landscape will look like this summer. We will do all we can to navigate these issues carefully and in a supportive manner.

What I would say is that delivering lessons through Teams is tough! It requires careful and time-consuming preparation – often planning old material in new ways - and it rarely gives the level of satisfaction we all get from seeing puzzlement turn to that 'lightbulb moment' in a normal classroom situation. We have all missed the day to day human interactions which make teaching so rewarding. Despite this, it is encouraging as always as to see the imaginative ways in which school life has continued- from pancake challenges to online PE, from house fitness challenges to live pet shows. I hope the new house music event will be equally successful. It all brings home the extent to which we just want to get back to normal.

Finally, I would like to update you on a few other items of staffing news. Both Mr Miller and Mr Clarke have announced their retirements at the end of the year. We will be thanking them for their long and outstanding service to the school over many years. Mr O'Donovan will also be retiring at the end of the year and Miss Raymond departs us in April. Though their time with us has been shorter we are immensely grateful for the work that they have done. After half term we will be joined by Miss Godsave, who will be our new resident deputy housemistress in Johnson House and who joins us from Royal Alexander and Albert School in Surrey. After half term we will also be interviewing for a new housemaster of School House who will not only join the boarding team in September but also teach in the day school too.

With best wishes for half term.

Jonathan Webb
Headmaster