



Re-founded 1555

Ripon Grammar School

Helping shape the future since 1555



17 February 2022

Dear Parents

Our belief is that a strong and vibrant school is based first and foremost on a strong set of values. These are values all members of the RGS community should embrace – students, staff and parents. These values are set out below:

- **Integrity:** *We want our students to be leaders guided by a core set of beliefs and who instinctively know what is the right thing to do in any given situation*
- **Kindness:** *We want our students to value and support each other in a spirit of mutual cooperation*
- **Curiosity:** *We recognise that a love of learning springs from a curiosity to understand and ask questions*
- **Aspiration:** *We want our students to aim high and have strong aspirations to pursue their passions in life*
- **Empathy:** *At the centre of kindness and care for others lies an ability to connect with each other*
- **Inclusivity:** *We want a community which recognises our differences in a spirit of equality*
- **Community:** *We want our students to recognise the importance of community both within and outside of school*

Over the last few weeks we have been conducting some focus group meetings involving school officers, members of the student council, boarding groups and year group meetings, in addition to a student survey conducted over Christmas.

What has emerged from this student voice is a view that there are minority elements within the school community, the size of which varies year by year, who are not demonstrating these values consistently, specifically with regard to discriminatory language and actions towards others – directed at sex, gender or sexuality, race or religion or disability. Much of this, it would appear, often goes unreported. This does not diminish our drive to adopt a zero-tolerance approach to such things.

What we do know is that young people today face a barrage of highly influential social media sources and can access, via their mobile phones, a huge amount of extremely concerning material. What is more, the prevalence of chat groups using platforms such as WhatsApp or Snapchat provides, quite often, an unregulated forum for inappropriate comments. While the majority of students choose to adopt a policy of ignoring such material, nevertheless it is unacceptable that they face it. While the school will try to do all it can, with limited resources, to combat this, we are also

reliant on parents and school working together to monitor young people's activities and challenge where necessary.

Our educational mission remains to reinforce the values of this school through such mediums as form time, assemblies, and PSHCE. It is imperative that students understand what language is, or acts are, discriminatory; what the impact is on the victims of such discrimination; what can be done to make amends. In addition the school is working on an Anti-Discrimination Action Plan which involves both staff and students to develop a multi-faceted drive to eradicate, as far as we can, such discrimination.

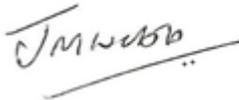
However, we also understand the limitations of such an approach, because we also know that some continue to carry out discriminatory acts even after such educative drives.

Consequently, we also must rely on the following:

- A student body where the overwhelming majority are unafraid to report and challenge the few who choose to discriminate against others.
- A school behaviour policy, guided by our obligations under the Equality Act 2010, which adopts a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination, supports the victims of such discrimination and seeks to rehabilitate and educate those who have perpetrated the act.
- A parental body who understand the school's obligations, support the school's behaviour policy and its educative and rehabilitative responsibilities.

I will be sharing our action plan when it has been completed. For further information about our objectives under the Equality Act and our approach to discrimination please see our Single Equality Scheme and Behaviour Policy which can be found in the policies section of our website.

Yours sincerely

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

Jonathan Webb
Headmaster

