

*Our reference: KHD/SB**

8th January 2021

Dear Families,

After a quite extraordinary start to the new term, I wanted to take this opportunity to update you on the current position in schools.

On Tuesday, students attended a remote assembly led by their Head of Year followed by tutor time. I know the Form Tutors enjoyed welcoming in the new term with their tutees and attendance to these events was excellent. Year 11 and Year 13 have also started their online learning with their subject teachers. Attendance has also been excellent to lessons and students have engaged really well. Thank you to those families who have contacted the school to pass on their appreciation to the staff; we really value your feedback.

Following the announcement on Monday that exams would not run ‘as normal’, the Secretary of State for Education announced in Parliament on Thursday that GCSE and A-Level examinations for Year 11 and Year 13 would be cancelled and that there will once again be a process by which schools will determine assessed grades. The school is waiting for greater detail from the Department for Education who are working with Ofqual about the process of determining these grades. It is certain that work being undertaken currently in lockdown will definitely be used as part of the evidence base for determining assessed grades and Year 11 and Year 13 must commit to engaging fully with the online programme of lessons. However, Vocational examinations have taken place as planned and we have ensured additional social distancing requirements have been implemented.

From Monday 11th January, the expectation is that every student should be online for every lesson. Following the pilot in the Summer Term, it was felt that in order for online learning to be effective, our provision would need to be based around students following their timetables and attending online lessons. The only exception is where the teacher is unavailable to teach, for example in the case of illness, and students will be advised whether to join another online lesson or complete work set on Satchel.

Students should be logged on each morning by 8.55am (8.45am on the days they have Tutor Time; further information will be shared with students on Monday) and follow their timetable, with 30-minute breaks at 11am and 1.30pm, until 3pm. To ensure that students are not overwhelmed by learning from home, teachers will no longer be setting homework but students may wish to complete classwork tasks or additional challenges in their own time.

Although students are not currently ‘at’ school, they are still expected to ‘attend’ and we have to continue to monitor attendance in the usual way. If your child is unwell and unable to engage with the online provision, please telephone the Attendance Officer to avoid receiving text messages and phone

calls if your child has not logged on (failure to log in will be coded as an absence so it is important that remote lessons are attended).

Thank you in advance for your support with getting students prepared for their online lessons; further information about our online learning can be found on our website <https://www.rphs.org.uk/page/?title=Remote+Learning&pid=1086> and there are details about who best to contact should there be any issues next week.

We will continue to update families as and when new information is received and I have every confidence that our school community will rise to the new challenges which this latest national lockdown will present.

With best wishes to you all and my thanks for your continued support of the school during these challenging times.

K. Heard

Mrs K Heard

Headteacher