



Ramsey Grammar School
Scoil Ghrammeydys Rhumsaa

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Dear Parent/Carer,

RGS IS OPEN TO ALL STUDENTS ON THE 22ND JUNE 2020

It is with great pleasure that I am able to inform you that RGS will be open to all students in Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12 from Monday 22nd June. Clearly, Year 11 and Year 13 students have now officially left us, although we will keep in touch with them of course with arrangements for results days and any other issues or events that concern them. It has been an extremely challenging time for all of us, not least the students, and it is wonderful to be able now to return to some form of normality with the lifting of social distancing restrictions.

From Monday 22nd June, students currently attending our key worker emergency hub will re-join their year group to resume their timetabled lessons. It has been a privilege to support our key worker colleagues by remaining open, apart from the TT holiday, throughout the lockdown to provide support for the students and their families in this way. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to my staff who put your children before their own families in coming into work during the time when the virus was circulating amongst our community. Their cheerful optimism and professionalism was a constant source of inspiration to me personally as well as to the students in their care.

I would also like to thank every single member of staff in the school, including the learning support assistants, admin staff and the caretaking, cleaning and catering teams who came together as a community to offer unstinting help and support to ensure that we all got through this unprecedented crisis knowing that we had a fantastic team behind us.

I would also like to thank you parents and carers of our RGS students for taking on, for the most part, the role of educator during the crisis. Supporting our students in their learning whilst dealing with the mental health challenges of living through a global pandemic must have been enormously challenging. You will notice on our website that we are asking for your feedback on how this was for you and your family. We are also asking you to give us an idea of how your child/children coped mentally with the lockdown. Please inform us of any issues which you think we need to be aware of so that we can support your child/children when they return to school next week.

My teachers did a magnificent job of providing online learning, the need for which none of us could either have expected or anticipated. We had to source solutions to the problem of providing online education and have learned many lessons in the process. You will have read in the media that there were various complaints about consistency of provision across the island and I can say on our behalf is that we tried very hard to adapt and refocus our provision on the basis of feedback which we asked for from the teachers. We undertook regular surveys to find out how many of our students were engaging with online learning and created a team using our wonderful support staff to follow up students if they did not appear to be engaging. This follow-up was in addition to the regular contact with students undertaken by tutors and pastoral staff.



You will probably be aware that we struggled to arrive at a consistent means of delivering live lessons, simply because of the data protection and safeguarding issues which we had to work out at the same time as trying to teach. This week, as you know, all teachers have returned to school, and one of our most urgent priorities is to learn from the lessons of lockdown and to develop and improve still further the excellent practices in evidence.

As we are now preparing for the return of the students to school I wish to conclude this letter with two really important messages:

1. **Health and Safety**

The incidence of the virus on island is extremely low. This has been confirmed by the medical advisor to the Isle of Man, Dr Henrietta Ewart. This is the reason why restrictions on social distancing have been lifted. It means that life at school can return more or less to normal. However, there were some important habits formed during the crisis that we need to continue. We must ask students to continue to observe the hygiene protocols, particularly hand washing, and to make use of the new mobile hand-washing and sanitising facilities around the school at every appropriate opportunity. Please refer to the hand hygiene guidance enclosed with this letter.

Crucially we must remind parents not to allow their child/children to attend school if they are ill. Please remember that the symptoms of Covid-19 are; a new continuous cough, temperature and loss of the sense of smell and taste, sometimes a headache. If your child or any of your family experience any of these symptoms please contact the Covid-19 helpline to obtain the advice of a medical practitioner. We would ask that you keep us informed of the outcome of the Covid test if this is recommended for you or any of your family.

2. **Attendance**

The IOM Government has made it clear that there will be no sanctions for any of you who decide not to send your child to school.

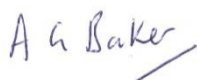
However, it is my firm belief that the best place for children is now back at school. If your child has been advised by your doctor to stay at home then of course that is the right thing to do. For the hopefully small number of students affected, we will of course provide a learning package.

I am concerned though about the long term effects of children on lockdown, both on their education and mental health and wellbeing. So we say to all students:

Come back to school
Wash your hands
Let's pick up our learning journey!

We look forward to seeing students on Monday – I am sure they will be delighted to hear that they do not have to wear school uniform for the remainder of this term!

Yours sincerely



Annette Baker
Headteacher