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RHENISH GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL

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PRINCIPAL: MS E H SLABBER

19 March 2020

Dear Parent / Guardians

COVID-19 – Extended School Break and the Academic Programme at Rhenish Girls' High

We are currently inundated with COVID-19 information. We need to reassure our girls that we are confident that we will get through this, together. We would like to reassure you that, in these extraordinary times, the staff at Rhenish Girls' High is committed to ensuring that no learner is disadvantaged academically by the extended school break.

The first term of 2020 has been a tremendously busy one for the staff and learners at Rhenish. It is important to remember that both learners and staff are on a much deserved **rest** until 30 March. Their brains do need a break to re-charge. The school break has been extended by the President from 31 March to 14 April, hence this letter.

We are still waiting for information and guidance from the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) with regard to assessments and exams next term as well as confirmation of the revised dates for June/July and September holidays. These are circumstances that no-one has had to plan for before and while we need to be proactive, we must also be aware that things can change in the space of 24 hours.

Please do not respond to 'news' you are bombarded with on social media. With regards schooling going forward, Rhenish will contact parents via email, d6+ Connect or SMS when we receive official updates or information from the DBE or WCED. While WhatsApp groups are useful and social media platforms may keep us connected, in the current situation these may add to panic and the spread of misinformation.

The second term was due to start on 31 March and the Rhenish staff is currently working on adapting our academic programme for distance learning to commence on this date. This programme is geared to run until the scheduled return to school on 14 April. The detailed programme (in the form of a link) for each subject in each grade will be communicated to parents on the d6+ connect app. Teachers will communicate it to the girls on our distance learning platforms (Google Classroom and the Learning Paths on ITS!) and, in some cases, via WhatsApp groups that some teachers may setup. If a WhatsApp group is established, we urge the girls to restrict communication on the group to academic matters and school time from 31 March, and to respect their teacher's time and privacy.

We acknowledge that every learner works at a different pace and may want to start work now or only from 31 March; she may complete the programme subject by subject or do a little of each subject per day. Subject requirements and teaching styles also impact on the plan going forward, but we are very fortunate in having many elearning strategies in place and our learners are comfortable and accustomed to working on Google Classroom and the Learning Paths (ITS!). Should a learner not have access to the



internet at home, it is vital that the parents contact the relevant Grade Head by Friday so that an arrangement can be made for this situation.

Grade 8: Mrs Smith – sherna.smith@rhenish.co.za

Grade 9: Dr Bennie – alison.bennie@rhenish.co.za

Grade 10: Ms Hofhuis – ingrid.hofhuis@rhenish.co.za

Grade 11: Ms Schreuder – ana.schreuder@rhenish.co.za

Grade 12: Mrs van Dyk – rozanne.vandyk@rhenish.co.za

There is, understandably, a great deal of uncertainty at this stage and Term 2 will be disruptive. We need to plan for a variety of scenarios as the situation unfolds and as we receive information from the DBE.

Contact time with teachers is an essential part of learning in many subjects and this will need to be worked into our programme for the new term. At this stage, there will be no sporting or cultural activities until 20 June and assemblies will also be replaced with scheduled teaching. A possibility we will also need to prepare for is an extended teaching day, with an eighth lesson being added to the timetable on specific days to make up for lost teaching time. These days would then end at 15H05.

The school will update parents and learners with information as and when we receive it from the DBE.

In this time of social distancing when the learners are going to be fairly restricted in their activities (many of their usual pursuits will not be available to them), it is important that, from 31 March, there is some routine to their day. They have the advantage of not having to get up early and commute to school, but they should treat it as a 'home-school' environment. They should have a space dedicated to work (not their beds!). They should start working at a given time, take regular breaks, but plan their work per subject as they would plan a study time table. Structure and routine, as well as relevant, meaningful work will give order to an otherwise potentially stressful period.

Finally, I would like to thank the Rhenish staff for their commitment and for the enthusiastic way in which they have embraced the challenge of transforming their learning plans into elearning strategies. Thank you also to the Rhenish parents and the Rhenish learners for your support throughout this challenging situation and for your co-operation going forward.

Please be safe over this period and practise the recommendations around social distancing and personal hygiene.

Yours sincerely



Ms E H Slabber
Principal

