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RHENISH GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL

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PRINCIPAL: MS E H SLABBER

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Dear Parents /Guardians

I assume most of South Africa sat in front of the TV on 30 April to hear the next step regarding education. According to the latest information received, the SMT (senior management team) will be back at school from the week of 11 May and the rest of the staff will be back on 18 May. The Grade 12s will be the first group to come back on 1 June and the rest of our Grades will still remain at home. No one knows anything further at this stage.

I am waiting in anticipation to get guidance from the DBE and WCED regarding the curriculum adjustments for Grade 8 – 11 for the rest of the year. At this stage I know that the Grade 12s will complete their curriculum, therefore they will return to school first. I must, however, add that things change very quickly and this too might change so please do open all communication received from us.

Rhenish staff members will continue to provide work for the girls until such time as ALL the girls return to school. I have received many emails from parents during this period of uncertainty and I would like to thank you for keeping the communication channels open. A special word of thanks to those parents who have written to express their appreciation of the lengths to which the Rhenish staff has gone to support our girls. This is, after all, new to all of us, and many of our staff are also parents of young children and they are deeply committed to your children while also trying to school and entertain their own children during lockdown.

These weeks of lockdown and then the extended lockdown have also given the staff time to reflect, to acknowledge what does and does not work for our learners and we have come up with the following educator's digital operating framework:

1. Worksheets / Power Points

This has been done for the past few weeks and the staff will continue to do this for our learners.

2. Engaging teaching

Staff will engage with our learners via a number of ways. It can be through a Zoom class (this is very difficult with a class of 25 or more), Google Meet, videos made by the staff to explain work, voice notes and any other creative ways. It is not expected that the staff teach in this way every single day. Very important to note: not every learner will be able, for example, to access the videos. However, this must be distributed on all platforms like WhatsApp, Google Classroom and ITS! We want to call it enriched teaching, meaning that a learner who cannot access this information due to data restrictions must not be disadvantaged.

3. Communication

We want to be available for all girls during office hours – what does it mean? Staff will connect



with the learners as far as possible and as regularly as possible. Some of the staff teach more than a 150 girls. We also ask girls to reach out to staff if they experience difficulties or obstacles in their learning. This has been communicated previously. Communication may be through WhatsApp or a Q&A via Zoom class, through emails and Google Classroom. Staff can make use of Google Forms or any other relevant application to communicate with the learners. Staff will check their communication regularly and they will reply as soon as possible between working hours (8:00 – 14:00).

4. Feedback

It is important that the staff establish whether the learners have covered all the work presented to date. The learners need to ascertain how well they understand the work and we expect the learners themselves to give feedback to the staff as to how well they have understood the work. The staff want to establish what the learners know or do not know and for this we expect the learners to complete the different forms of assessment sent to them by staff members. This allows both the staff and the learners to pick up on gaps and that provides staff with an opportunity to close the gap. The type of feedback (assessment) will vary but could include an online 'mini-test', working through and submitting a section of an old test paper, a Google survey to determine their level of understanding or other means.

The next set of academic work for ONE week will be sent to parents and girls on Monday 4 May. Please take note that we will from now on post work on a weekly basis – Monday to Friday.

I have had many requests / discussions regarding branded masks for Rhenish Girls' and I am waiting for the sample to send it to parents so that we can determine the level of parent interest and how many of these branded masks must be ordered. A Google form will be sent to parents once I receive the final sample, which should be in this week. Please take note that masks will be compulsory to wear at school for the next few months at least, but the branded Rhenish mask is NOT COMPULSARY and the school is not putting any kind of mark up on the mask – this is an essential item and not something on which we wish to make any money.

I believe that many of us are uncertain of what the future will hold, we don't know what is going to happen in the next few months when girls will be coming back to school. I too have many questions and I trust that I will get guidance and answers very soon. None of us has ever been in this situation and clarity is needed to be able to plan properly. It is a big responsibility to manage this situation with a school of over 700 people. This situation is daunting for all of us. I have faith that the DBE and WCED will provide guidance in the next two weeks and I will share this with parents as soon as I have clarity.

Thank you for your continued support in this difficult period.

Yours sincerely



EH Slabber
Principal

