

JANUARY 2021

RIC WITHOUT WALLS



VIRTUAL SCHOOLING FROM
ROCHESTER
INDEPENDENT COLLEGE

The World Is Our Classroom

Rochester Independent College has, once again, removed the walls of our lovely listed buildings via Google Suite. **Welcome back to our online classrooms.** Our creative, academic and community based learning environment is once again being beamed into in the homes of our students, whether they be just around corner or on the other side of the world. In place of traditional physical classrooms, our teachers will work with students in online classrooms over the internet.

Regular lessons, live debates, Q and A sessions, regular formal assessment and proactive feedback are all possible through the use of Google Meet. The experience will be as comprehensive as possible. Students are able to share their thoughts and ideas in real time. Staff are able to provide high levels of interaction, ensuring the learning experiences are effective and engaging. Reporting to parents will continue according to the scheduled timetables.

Our RIC intranet will be updated over the coming weeks. Log into your college email to access it then visit: www.ricwithoutwalls.org.uk

We'll be continuing to develop our online learning environment to maximise its effectiveness.





Lower School

The personalised learning element of RIC's successful teaching practices are able to continue into this virtual environment and we'll be communicating live with the students in lessons. The essence of community remains throughout. Students take part in Form Time twice a day to 'check in' with their classmates and Form Tutor.

It is vital that students maintain a consistent and effective routine, just as if the students were within the walls of the college. The students experience a range of lessons from live video streaming to independent project based learning experiences. This supports the physical and mental well-being of our students by ensuring the curriculum continues to be diverse and include a range of activities that are engaging, inspiring, academic and creative.

Where sport appears on the timetable students will do a physical activity to support mental and physical health. To enhance the sense of community our staff will continue to offer extra-curricular clubs. More details to follow. Year 11 students will continue to work online to complete coursework and finish syllabuses.



Sixth Form

In Sixth Form our doors remain virtually open and personal tutors will be working with students individually. Most parental and student contact with tutors will be through email. They will check-in with students and keep up to date with progress, as usual, but students must be proactive with emailing their tutor if they have any questions or need any support. Just because they cannot knock on their tutor's door to speak, does not mean they cannot get hold of them when they need. It may be that students or tutors would still like to hold a tutor meeting which may be arranged via Meet.

Year 13 and 14 students will be continuing to work online. Personal tutors will work with students applying for university to ensure that their UCAS forms are completed and sent off by the 15 January deadline.

We are aware that some students' personal circumstances may make studying online consistently and completing work difficult or impossible and nobody will be penalised if this is the case.



Visual Arts

Teaching the Visual Arts remotely has been made possible with the effective and creative use of the Google Suite. Students continue to receive personalised and timely feedback and take part in tutorials to ensure they are able to confidently and skilfully develop their portfolios.

For all exam students studying Art & Design subjects and specifically Graphic Design and Photography, we would strongly recommend purchasing the Adobe Creative Suite so as to allow students to continue working on their coursework projects. Start by downloading the 7 day free trial using college email address.
<https://www.adobe.com/uk/creativecloud/start-with-free-creativecloud.html>

Unless Adobe change their policy, following this it will cost £16.24 per month for students. This price is based on an annual contract.
<https://www.adobe.com/uk/products/pricing-info/ccste-pricing-info.html>

Lessons continue to be collaborative with the use of Google Meet with staff and students enhancing the experience through live Q and A sessions, discussions about concepts and skills. Live demonstrations are possible and these enhance the learning experience. Students are able and willing to share their work online allowing the teachers to provide vital and timely advice and feedback live. Our Visual Arts Team shares work within the Google Suite to celebrate and create our very own online Gallery, building on the success of this year's touring exhibition.

Access and Support

Access will be required to the Google Suite for any of the remote learning tools. Students all have email addresses and have access to the Suite throughout the year, most use it regularly as gmail is the primary means of communication. We are looking at Skype and Wechat access to lessons should some of our international students have difficulty accessing google platforms. Many lessons will be recorded and resources available 24/7 so students studying worldwide will have the support they need.

The primary apps students will need access to will likely be google Meet, Calender, Docs and Drive. Some teachers may employ other means of teaching, they will inform their students directly. All of these apps will send messages to their Gmail account so it is important for them to check it regularly.

Many documents, such as past paper questions, notes, or worksheets, will be made available to students via Classroom and work may be set on the Classwork tab. Some departments have provided access to documents in Google Drive. In Drive, students can find 'Shared Drives' on the left hand side and departmental folders will appear (e.g. History Students). Some teachers will email students directly, using their college Gmail account, with any documents, work and feedback. Students must keep an eye on their email account regularly.

If students are having problems with any of the Google systems (e.g. they cannot log in or access one of their classes on Google Classroom) they should either email itstudentsupport@rochester-college.org.uk or phone 07483 376659 between 8am and 6pm GMT Monday-Friday.



Attendance

Attendance in lessons continues to be expected. Teachers will register students using the online iSAMS system that we normally use and parents will be informed of absence from lessons. Teachers will expect students to be online prior to the start of the timetabled lesson, dressed appropriately.

Submitting Work

Written work will primarily be completed as it is currently; written independently then handed in, although using email. However, students may be asked at some points to complete work on Google Docs. This will usually be set through the Classwork tab of Classroom. Again, any difference in teacher requirements will be communicated with students beforehand.



Online Learning Tips

We recognise that online learning is more difficult for some students than others. Our teachers know our students well and will continue to be mindful of their particular learning styles and additional needs.

There are lifestyle changes, technology challenges and self-discipline demands that will take some time for us all to adapt to.

We're here to support our students. Teachers are working hard to make sure lessons are engaging and rigorous. Students will need to log in, engage and participate.

Web based learning is very popular in national and multinational organisations around the world and students will also use it when they go to university to supplement lectures and seminars.

Studying via RIC Without Walls will help everyone prepare for the next steps in their education and working lives.

GOOGLE MEET NETIQUETTE

A GUIDE FOR STUDENTS



MUTING

When you enter the Meet/Hangout, mute yourself (if you are not already muted).

QUESTIONS

When you have a question, type it in the textbox and wait for your teacher to call on you.



CONTRIBUTING

When you have something to contribute to what is being said, but it is not your turn, use the chat feature in the top right-hand corner.



YOUR TURN

Wait for the teacher to call on you to unmute yourself. Only one student should contribute/talk at a time.



WHERE TO LOOK

Look into the camera when you are talking.



STAY ATTENTIVE

Pay attention to your teacher or other students who are speaking.





Wellbeing

We will be writing to all students with advice on how to stay 'healthy in mind' in the coming weeks, suggesting a variety of strategies including mindfulness and meditation.

We know students will also continue to support each other through this challenging period, as they always do.

Our art clubs will include activities for families to share together. We'll also be offering guidance on how to keep active and exercising and reminders to keep using social media responsibly.



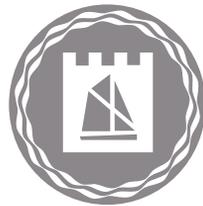
Exam Entries

All public exam entries remain in place. The government announcement that GCSE and A Level exams will not take place this year has raised a number of questions about how exactly grades and university places will be awarded. We await further guidance on how this will work. Unless we are advised otherwise students should continue to study and prepare for their exams with the support of their teachers online, as if they were taking place.

We need this to happen so that we have reliable assessment information and evidence of their continuing progress and achievement.



Our focus remains simple:
We will provide all RIC students with
a first-class education and work with
those studying towards A level and
GCSE exams so they can do their
very best and secure places at their
chosen sixth forms and universities.



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TOGETHER WE'RE EXTRAORDINARY



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