



**Rye College**  
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[www.ryecollege.co.uk](http://www.ryecollege.co.uk)

Executive Headteacher: Mr Barry Blakelock  
Head of College: Mr Dom Downes

23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021

Dear families,

We were absolutely delighted to hear the Prime Minister's announcement that children should return to school from Monday, 8<sup>th</sup> March. We are now firmly on the road out of lockdown and we look forward to seeing all our students return.

Over the coming week, we will contact you to outline our plans for the safe return to school for our students. Our planning will include the management lateral flow testing, safe management of teaching, classrooms and travelling to and from school.

Today, I wanted to follow up on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion survey we asked you to complete last term.

We would like to thank all the families who responded to the Aquinas Trust's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion survey. While we are pleased that the majority of families feel that the College positively supports equality and diversity – for example, over 85% of families felt that Rye College gives students equal opportunities -- there are some hard messages around how inclusive the College is.

It is clear that some students' experiences have not been reflective of the College's values. Alongside the Trust, Rye College is developing an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) action plan to:

- Increase all stakeholders' understanding of the EDI agenda;
- Plan, implement and embed procedures and processes that support EDI;
- Ensure that **every** child is supported within and by the college community.

To this end, we have appointed a lead for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion within the staff body, who will work alongside the senior leadership team and the newly appointed Student Leadership team to drive forward the agenda. This will include further surveys for colleagues, students and families. Miss L. Halvey is already working extensively in reviewing our procedures and processes to identify areas for development.

Your responses recognised how much the college has transformed and challenged us to continue that journey.

Critically, our focus will be to ensure that our practices and procedures do not discriminate; encourage equality of opportunity; and foster good and fruitful relationships. These ends will be achieved through the review of our practices and curriculum.

We recognise that our curriculum lacks diversity in its breadth and coverage. This is reflected both in the National curriculum and the school's curriculum. The pandemic and your feedback has given us an opportunity to reflect on the breadth and balance of Rye College's curriculum. We, along with students and families, recognise the increasing importance of a curriculum that supports the whole child through both the acquisition of knowledge and the development of personal awareness.

Consequently, we have reviewed and developed our curriculum across all the years to embed a wider exploration of identity, relationships, our place within the world and society, preparation for next steps, and the development of skills and knowledge that we need to prosper and be happy in our lives. At the same time, our curriculum is planned to ensure that students can achieve their bright futures through academic learning.



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Family feedback is essential for us as it informs our thinking and helps us in our continued journey to transform lives through education. I am very grateful to all of you who have contacted us or responded to the surveys. In particular, the EDI survey marks the beginning of a Trust wide programme that will have an impact on our communities for years to come. We will continue to keep you informed of our work and progress throughout the coming months via letters, newsletters, website information and school based events.

Finally, I would like to thank you all – members of the Rye College community – for your support, hard-work and engagement. By continuing to work in partnership, we will meet face the challenges together.

Yours faithfully,

Mr. D. Downes

Head of College

