



From the Headmaster

If a TV or online campaign were to look for a theme tune to promote the concept of resilience, you could easily see them opting for Billy Ocean's iconic track *"When the going gets tough, the tough get going."* There would, I am sure, be a fair few who would question this – a pretty cheesy song choice and one dating back an alarming 35 years to 1985 – and there are certainly a number of low points in the lyrics: *"I'm gonna buy me a one-way ticket; nothin's gonna hold me back."* Nothing, however, beats the seemingly deep but utterly meaningless, *"I'm gonna get myself 'cross the river; that's the price I'm willing to pay."* Unless he was intending to travel by ferry, I struggle to see the relevance of this sentiment.

Resilience has been a buzz word in educational, and other circles, in recent times but it is only in the last few weeks that the integral value of this quality has really shone through. These unprecedented times have demanded true resilience: the ability to be flexible, look for solutions, and re-invent so many elements of our life which up until now we have just taken for granted. It has been inspiring to see how readily our community has adapted in so many ways from the physical to the remote/virtual worlds. Without for a second underestimating just how challenging these unprecedented times have been for so many people, the RGS has proved that, albeit clichéd, it is only in times of challenge that you see a community's true colours. Or to put it another way when the going gets tough, the tough get going.

Our community has showed extraordinary creativity ever since lockdown was announced. The Great RGS Bake-Off with this year's theme of positivity and cakes that make you smile was launched at a time when eggs and flour were scarce to come by. This seemed to prove only a minor irritation as the extraordinary results of the cooking competition proved. Doing a charity run, when you are distant and limited to one hour of exercise a day should be a significant obstacle, but the #WearItWithPride event saw the streets of Surrey and beyond decked with families wearing or squeezing into RGS branded rugby shirts, PE tops, and hoodies. The event sent out a powerful message that during times of difficulty, looking out for others and supporting others has never been so important. These two events alone raised over £7,500 for our local nominated charity, *Shooting Star Children's Hospices*.

I could not be more grateful to my support staff who, almost overnight, responded quite magnificently to the challenges of running a school from afar, a not inconsiderable challenge. I am also staggered but not surprised that the teaching staff have re-invented themselves as remote classroom practitioners, embracing technology, but most of all remaining true to their vocation: passionate about their subject, passionate about education, and passionate about the students. I would also like to thank my SMT who 'willingly' agreed to

sleep out in aid of *Centrepoint*, the youth homeless charity, last weekend. As well as raising a staggering sum of almost £8,700, my senior team really epitomised so many of the characteristics of the RGS of which I am so proud.

Finally, and most importantly, I would like to thank the students for how they have coped and conducted themselves up to now. I do not, for a second, underestimate what a profound impact this period of self-isolation has had on so many levels: social interaction, mental health, screen time, and so I could continue. And yet the extraordinary sense of camaraderie, albeit remote, the pride in their own performance, and their stoic desire to make the very best of the current situation have been extraordinary. Every single student deserves huge credit and I also know that providing invaluable support behind the scenes – and extreme levels of patience! – have been you, the parents, so a heartfelt thanks to you all.

So, as we break up for a much-needed and very well-deserved half term, we should be proud, as I am sure Billy Ocean would agree, cheesy or not, of just how many rivers we have crossed and I would like to wish you all a relaxing and restful break.

I look forward to seeing you all refreshed and ready for the second half of this term #RGSTogether.