



Dear Class of 2021

I hope you are staying healthy. We miss your beautiful smiles in our offices. And we will never get used to speaking to you from behind a screen.

I am sure, like me, you have this unsettling feeling that seems to follow you everywhere you go these days. Let me just recognize that this feeling is sadness and grief for the loss of our normal life rhythms and routines. Life as we know it has seized, and the feelings that fluctuate inside us are feelings of loss. And in our context, especially in Palestine, it almost feels ridiculous to complain about curfews and life coming to a complete stop, aren't we used to this after all? Haven't this country survived and persevered under similar circumstances before? You almost feel like you cannot complain, which compounds this uncomfortable feeling even further. The truth is; it is ok to feel sad, it is ok to miss the normalcy of our daily lives. Please know that this too shall pass and that there is life after a pandemic. So onwards and upwards class of 2021! The only way out of this is forward.

By now, all of you should have their Kognity account set up, some teachers are already using it to set up assignments, and we expect more teachers to use it in the coming few days. I see that many of you are engaging with those assignments and completing your work. Please do let us know what you think of it. Is this something worth keeping for next year as well? Can it be of further support for your studies?

For parents who are not yet familiar with Kognity; Kognity is a platform founded by two IBDP alumni, one of which is of Palestinian origins. During our research on e-learning platforms to use with grade 11 during the quarantine period, we found that many schools are using Kognity. We acquired a trial period of six weeks, and will be looking at student and teacher feedback. Because Kognity is textbook based and contains past paper questions, and automatically graded assignments, it allows us to gather data on student performance that can be used in offering them support. For now we are trialing the platform, however, we will look into keeping Kognity as a complimentary platform to the classroom. To learn more, please visit the following link:

<https://kognity.com/kognity-training-videos/>

After three weeks at home, I am sure you are starting to feel anxious about your children's future. It is important to clarify here that the remote learning mechanisms put in place are in no way a substitution for in class learning, most especially for grade 11 students who will be sitting for their officials in May 2021 (Inshallah).

Grade 11 teachers, along with the RFS Upper School academic council, meet weekly to reassess the current situation. We are looking at both short term plans and long term plans for grade 11 students. In terms of short term plans here is what will be happening in the coming week or so:

1. Extended Essays:
 - a. Teachers will contact students and start working on extended essays.
 - b. The extended essay guide was sent again to students on their emails from ustaz Luai
 - c. Advisor and topic list is now up to date.
 - d. Students should work with their EE advisor in the coming week and submit what is required.



- e. Under normal circumstances, EE first drafts are usually completed during the summer, however, we plan to use this time to complete a good amount of work until we return to classes.

2. New Materials

- a. Teachers report covering new materials during this time.
- b. Although material coverage in remote learning is always significantly slower than face to face coverage, we will continue with this pace.
- c. E-classes will remain at twice a week taking into consideration that students and teachers alike have limited access to the internet and the number of devices available at home for children and parents to use.
- d. In addition to E-Classes, reading assignments, Kognity assignments and one to one Q&A will continue.

3. Updates on Edunation: We are proud to continue our work with EduNation, a Palestinian company based here in Palestine and employing local talent in software programming, and coding. Based on your feedback, EduNation developed the following features:

- . Teachers can now record their classes and make them available for students to revisit when needed.
- a. Students can now attend E-Class from their mobile device: iphone, ipad. In order to do that please update the EduNation mobile app and log into your student account.
- b. Microphones can be used by students to facilitate direct audio and visual interactions with teachers. Teachers can choose to activate mics as needed for class.

As for long term plans: we are currently planning for the next phase:

- Life after the Quarantine:
 - i. Teachers and school leadership are planning for grade 11 and their return to school.
 - ii. It was already announced that grade 11 will begin their next academic year as early as August 1, 2020. However, we are now looking at different scenarios for summer teaching that will ensure we make up the lost class time before we begin grade 12.
 - iii. We will reassess the situation every week and update you on future plans based on the continuation of the Quarantine period. Please expect that your children may be in school for some time during the summer months.
 - iv. Lessons learned from remote learning, what approaches, platforms can we keep to supplement in class learning for the future.

This is a kind reminder that remote learning at RFS was designed to fit the RFS context and based on research done by the RFS leadership team. We are acutely aware of equity and equality in terms of resources (internet access, internet speed, no. of devices at home) available to our students and teachers, and are committed to reaching every child and supporting every teacher. We continue to make efforts that ensure that none of our students or teachers are marginalized in this respect in terms of scheduling, work load and number of e-classes offered.

Please remember that while you are at home with your children trying to do your own work, and finding that to be difficult, our teachers are also at home with their children, facing the same challenges.

If you feel that we are over assigning homework, and that your child is feeling pressured above and beyond what a Diploma Student should be experiencing, please do let us know. We understand that in remote learning the tendency to over assign work is present, and are happy to address it. Attached you will find the assignment due date schedule and the e-class schedule for the coming week.



My email is rkafri@rfs.edu.ps and look forward to hearing back from you.

Stay Safe! Stay Healthy! Stay at Home!

In Friendship
Dr. Riyam Kafri AbuLaban
Upper School Principal

