

WELCOME TO THE RCN COMMUNITY



UWC RED CROSS
NORDIC



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INTRODUCTION

What is a community?

The word “community” refers to a group of people who share a common bond or identity, such as living in the same geographical area, sharing similar interests or values, or belonging to a particular cultural group. Members of a community often interact with each other, cooperate to achieve common goals, and support each other in times of need. Communities can be small or large, and can exist at local, national, or even global levels. The concept of community is important in promoting social cohesion, building relationships, and fostering a sense of belonging and mutual support among individuals.

What kind of community do we want to build at RCN?

Building a strong community is the most important thing that we do here at UWCRCN. The UWC mission is to make education a force to unite people, nations and cultures for peace and a sustainable future. In a fractured and chaotic world, we want RCN to be a model for what the world could look like and we hope that you are excited to be a part of that work.

Our identity as a United World College is at the core of what we do, but it is the Red Cross and Nordic elements of our identity which makes us a truly unique community. In Nordic countries, community has a specific cultural meaning which emphasises the importance of social relationships and mutual respect, and the understanding that everyone has a responsibility to contribute to the well-being of others in the community.





The Red Cross organisation is planted firmly in these Nordic ideals, and as an organisation they are committed to providing assistance without discrimination to all people in need, regardless of their race, religion, gender, or political beliefs. They do this independently from any political or religious affiliation and rely on a world wide network of volunteers who freely give their time, energy, and skills to serve those in need. The Red Cross, like the UWC, is working to transcend national boundaries and promote universal human dignity. We are privileged to share both a physical and an ideological space with this remarkable organisation.

What does all of this mean for you as a student at RCN and a part of this United World College, Red Cross and Nordic community? It means that you will be expected to be honest, responsible and to treat others with respect and compassion. You will need to participate fully in College life, accept accountability for your actions and decisions, have integrity in meeting your responsibilities and strive to honour your agreements. Perhaps most importantly, you will be expected to make every effort to learn and grow from each other.

Why are we a deliberately diverse community?

A deliberately diverse community can help to create a more positive and honest learning environment, as it encourages individuals to be open-minded and respectful of different perspectives. This will inevitably lead to greater understanding, empathy, and cooperation, which are all essential for improving the world.

A diverse community like RCN brings together individuals with different backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives. This diversity can lead to a broader range of ideas and solutions, which can be particularly important when tackling complex problems- of which there are many in the world. This exposure to different perspectives, and the challenge of learning from them can lead to innovation and creativity and to help break down damaging stereotypes and promote empathy and understanding. By bringing people from different backgrounds together, a diverse community can promote social cohesion and help to build bridges between different groups. This community, built on knowledge, respect and compassion will naturally be more inclusive and provide a space where individuals from different backgrounds can feel valued and included.



Becoming an RCN Human



Compassion

Empathy, Communication Skills,
Kindness, Generosity, Service,
Courage



Responsibility

Time Management, Accountability
Communication Skills, Adaptability,
Honesty



Self Worth

Self-Awareness, Resilience,
Gratitude, Self-Care, Willingness to
ask for help



Intercultural Understanding

Open Mindedness, Empathy,
Communication Skills, Cultural
Knowledge, Patience, Courage



Environmental Sustainability


Critical Thinking, Environmental
Knowledge, Communication Skills,
Leadership, Courage



BECOMING AN RCN HUMAN

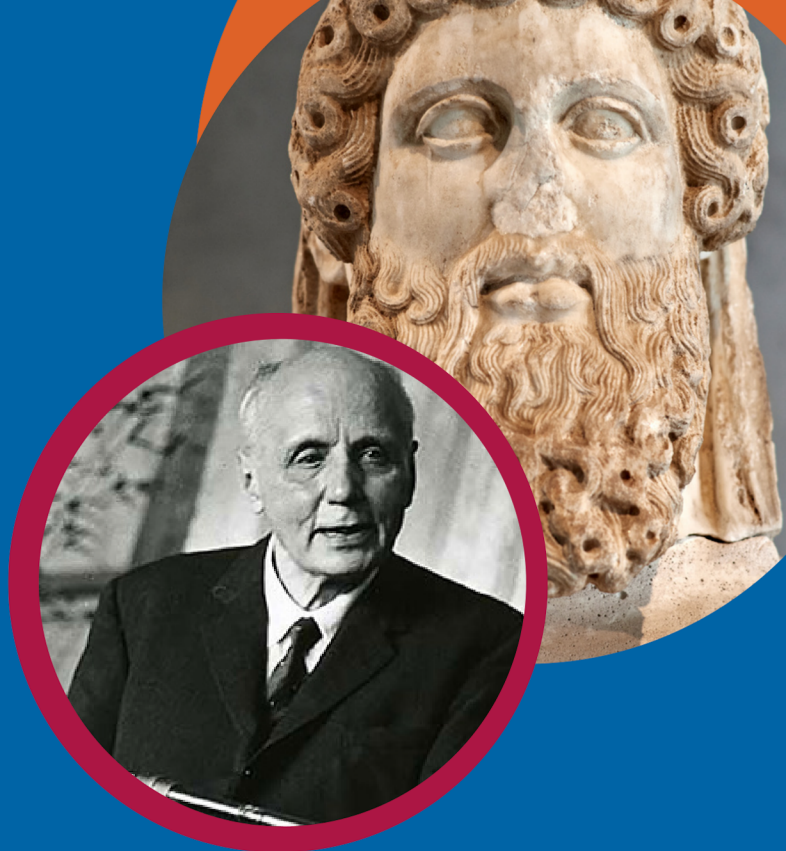
The philosopher Aristotle, who lived in the 4th century BCE, argued that reaching your full human potential is only possible if you can achieve eudaimonia. Eudaimonia means "happiness" or "flourishing," but not in the sense of temporary pleasures. Instead, Aristotle wrote that it is only by living a virtuous life that any of us can actually feel truly happy. How do live a virtuous life? According to Aristotle, virtues are habits or behaviours that enable us to act in a way that is consistent with reason and moral principles. He distinguished between intellectual virtues, such as wisdom and understanding, and moral virtues, such as courage and justice.

Aristotle believed that we acquire virtues through consciously choosing to practise them until we become excellent at them. For example, to become courageous, we must practise acting courageously until it becomes a habit. Over time, this habit will become second nature, and we will develop a virtuous character. As Aristotle said, "Excellence is never an accident. It is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, and intelligent execution; it represents the wise choice of many alternatives - choice, not chance, determines your destiny."




Kurt Hahn, the founder of the UWC Movement, once said “There is more to us than we know. If we can be made to see it, perhaps for the rest of our lives we will be unwilling to settle for less. Perhaps Kurt Hahn was inspired by Aristotle, because if we strive to practise the values of the UWC and Red Cross until they become habit then we will certainly lead more fulfilling lives, and may never be willing to settle for less from ourselves again.

As an IB student you will already be practising a number of virtues, meeting the IB Learning Profile. You will be striving to be inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced and reflective. This alone is a commitment to develop as an internationally minded individual, and choosing to practise these 10 values until they become habit is a mission in itself, and will certainly help to make the world a better place. At RCN, we go one step further. Becoming an RCN Human means that you are committing to practising what Aristotle referred to as the moral virtues alongside the intellectual virtues.



This process will be uncomfortable at times, even frightening, as it will require you to challenge not just your behaviours, but your ways of thinking. Becoming an RCN Human means choosing to practise the virtues of Courage, Compassion, Responsibility, Environmental Sustainability, Intercultural Understanding and Self-Worth by developing the skills that will enable you to do so. Becoming an RCN Human means to choose, over and over again, to engage in dialogue over debate, empathy over retaliation, open-mindedness over biases and gratitude over complaint and negativity. Our Wellbeing Programme, which you will take part in over the course of your two years here, will give you many opportunities to learn, reflect and practise these virtues and the skills that go along with them.



SOME REFLECTION QUESTIONS

The first thing that we ask you to do as part of this journey is to answer the set of reflection questions below, and I hope that you will all take the time to think through each of these honestly and carefully. Reflection is important because it can bring clarity, help you understand how you are feeling and help you decide on the direction you want to take in the future. It can increase self-confidence by helping you to identify strengths and help you generate new ideas through creative thinking. Reflection can help you develop your own wellbeing plan (explained later!)

1. Start with Yourself

- What does compromise mean for you?
- Are you able to compromise in order to help others feel safe and comfortable?
- What is a home?
- Have you ever had an opinion that is different from your family and friends? What did that feel like?
- What does compassion mean to you?
- What kind of person do you want to be friends with?
- Do you think that resources should be shared equally?



- How do you show compassion to others?
- How have others shown compassion towards you? What does it feel like when this happens?
- What does responsibility mean to you?
- What needs do you think every human being has?
- What does service mean to you?
- How do you handle disappointment?
- What kind of role models do you have? What do you learn from them?
- How do you think someone becomes a “good” person?
- What does courage mean to you?
- What is more important for you, the individual or the community?
- How do you feel when someone does not respect your needs? For example, your need for sleep or a clean space or quiet.
- Are there any opinions or views that you find very difficult to hear? How do you respond when this happens?
- Do you feel comfortable asking for help? Why is this?
- Have you ever felt isolated or lonely? What did that feel like? What could someone have done to help you?



2. Now think about your family and home

- What chores do you have at home?
- How do decisions get made in your family?
- Can you describe the approach to authority in your family?
- What is a normal evening in your home like?
- Is responsibility for household tasks shared in your home or taken on by one person or group of people?
- What expectations does your family have for your behaviour?

3. What about your wider community?

- How do decisions get made in your town, city, country?
- What benefit do rules have for the community?
- How do you feel when someone breaks the rules?
- Can you describe the approach to authority in your home community or country?
- How do you think theft affects a community?
- What do you give to your community at home?
- What expectations do you have in a community for other people's behaviour?
- What values do you wish the whole community to have? Why is this important?

4. A few practical things

- What do you need to sleep well?
- Have you ever experienced snow?
- How do you feel about the rain?
- Have you ever shared a room with other people before? What are the opportunities and challenges in sharing with 4 other people?
- Have you ever had to do your own laundry?

YOUR SUPPORT SYSTEM AT RCN



The 10 Layers of Support

The College has ten basic layers of support, to help us take care of you, and care about you.

First Layer of Support, The House Leaders

The House Leader is at the core of the pastoral system at RCN. Each House Leader has overall responsibility for the care and support of the 40 students in their house (43 students in Iceland House). The House Leader takes on the role of *in loco parentis*. The term "*in loco parentis*" is a Latin phrase that means "in the place of a parent" and we will all do our very best to care for you in this role. House Leaders are responsible for the well-being of the students who live in their house and ensuring that the students are safe, healthy, and happy. They will also enforce any rules, expectations and regulations that promote a positive living environment.

Perhaps most importantly, the House Leaders are here to provide emotional support and guidance to the students under our care. We can be the first point of contact for students who are experiencing difficulties or who need someone to talk to and we will work hard to build trust between us. House Leaders all receive specialised training in Mental Health First Aid, as well as ongoing training in areas including anxiety and depression, empathic listening and safeguarding.

Our overwhelming purpose is to help each of you feel that you belong, and that you are safe and cared for no matter how far you are from home. We hope that you will let us support you and help you to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

MORE ABOUT YOUR HOUSE LEADERS



Sarah House Leader of Iceland House and Community Life Leader

Welcome to RNC! I arrived at RCN in July 2022 with my husband Alex and our son Joshua. We had been living on an island called Guernsey, between England and France while I was on maternity leave. Within a few months of being here I added two bunnies (Nemo and Grabanz) and two kittens (Jens and Norna) to her family- all animals are available for cuddling! I love gardening, napping, reading, eating taco's and hanging out with all of the students!

I have worked in residential schools for over 13 years, in a variety of teaching and pastoral roles, and I absolutely love being a part of the community here at RCN. This is possibly the most beautiful place I have ever lived, beside this still and peaceful Fjord with snow capped mountains and tree covered cliffs. The best part about RCN though is the community itself, which I have found to be incredibly close-knit and welcoming. For me, living far from my wider family, this community provides incredible support and purpose, and I hope that you will all feel the same way.

Paola, House Leader of Finland House and Teacher of Spanish

Hi, everybody! My name is Paola and I am originally from Spain. I have lived in India for the past 11 years, which has become my home too. This picture was taken at MUWCI where I worked as a Spanish teacher; and this is one of the activities I supervised: Gomukh farm.

I am passionate about nature, books, coffee and conversations on human rights and justice. Walking and swimming give me inner peace as well as listening to music (every day!) and being with my wife, Ainhua.

What I enjoy most about residential life is that we all work together as a community to learn about each other in a 360 degrees experience, allowing us to be round, balanced and complete individuals.

Looking forward to chatting with all of you and getting to know you and your passions in life.



Mtheto, House Leader of Norway House and Teacher of English



I am Mtheto Kadoko Hara but you may call me Mtheto (pronounced Mmm - Tay - Toe). I am from Malawi, but lived for several years in Thailand with my wife Anocha, our two children - Nathan our son age 13 and Roberta our daughter age 3.

I am a Secondary School Teacher with a focus on English Language and Humanities. I hold a Bachelor of Education degree from Catholic University of Eastern Africa in Nairobi, Kenya. I started my teaching career in 2007 and I have since then taught in Lilongwe, Malawi at Bambino Private Schools and also in Chiang Mai, Thailand at Prem Tinsulanonda International School.

Aside from teaching, my personal passion project is performing my own original music and poetry. I write, produce and perform my own original hip hop music and I have a Spotify Artist's Page under the Artist Name COOLETIC MUZEK.

I can't wait to meet each and every one of you.

Karen, House Leader of Sweden House and Teacher of Learning Support



My name is Karen Amolo [Lady K] as most people know me here. I come from Kenya. I am a single mum of four; Jerry, Joe, Esther and Reuben, having been widowed for the last twenty four years. Three of my children are married with their own families while Reuben the youngest is a university student at Stellenbosch University in South Africa.

My background is in Special Education, specialising in the Education of Mentally Handicapped and Specific Learning Difficulties. I also have a Bachelor's degree in Philosophy in Education from the University of Warwick. I have over thirty five years teaching experience mostly in International schools and with various curriculums. I taught at Braeburn School, Kenya [National English Curriculum], Aga Khan Academy, Nairobi [IB World School], Windhoek International School, Namibia [IB] and now at this prestigious UWC school where I have been since August 2021.

I am passionate about mentoring the youth and I am surely looking forward to interacting and sharing learning experiences with you all as I believe there is never an end to learning. My motto is "Forward Ever, Backward Never"

David, House Leader of Denmark House and Teacher of Global Politics

My name is David Ouma. I am from Kenya in East Africa. I am currently living in Johannesburg, South Africa with my family (Seated from right Keith, Kayla and Hawi and standing next to me is my wife Josephine).

I am an enthusiastic educator. I teach World History, International Relations, Politics and Society.

I am excited about my transition to UWCRCN. The humanitarian focus of the institution's mission resonates with my drive and passion for the humanities and social/political sciences. I am eagerly looking forward to engaging with the UWCRCN community through the Global Politics lens. I am also looking forward to learning experiences that collaboratively leverage global social impact. Most importantly, I am thrilled at the prospect of Residential Life. The space provides authentic experiences that foster an intentional community of caring and shared values.

I am looking forward to seeing you soon!



Second Layer of Support, Your Room

Each Student House has between 40-44 students. There are five students in each room, and we expect students to be committed to the welfare of their roommates, giving another layer of support. With each student committing to care for their roommates, it will be difficult to struggle without someone noticing. As a room you will create a room agreement to help you communicate what you need, and respect what others need as well

Third Layer of Support, Specific Student Support

Within each House there are a range of students who have taken on additional responsibilities to support others. This includes House Representatives, Peer Listeners, First Aiders, Mental Health First Aiders and Student Council members.

Each House has two house representatives who serve as part of the Community Life Committee, and who are available to support all students on a regular basis. Their role is to be a practical support to members of the House and to advise the Community Life Leader on any decisions affecting the community.

The role of Peer Listeners is to provide a safe and non-judgmental space for individuals to share their thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Peer listeners are individuals who have undergone training (led by our Wellbeing Counsellor) to develop active listening skills and to provide emotional support. Their primary goal is to listen actively and attentively to the person who is seeking support. This involves providing empathy and understanding, without trying to offer solutions or advice. Peer listeners aim to create a trusting relationship with the person they are listening to, to help them feel heard, validated, and cared for.

First Aiders are students who have undergone training in order to be able to provide immediate assistance to anyone who becomes ill or injured on school grounds. As a student first aider, their main responsibility is to respond to emergencies promptly and provide basic first aid until further medical help arrives.

Mental Health First Aiders have undertaken a specialised Mental Health First Aid (Youth) Qualification. The goal of a mental health first aider is to provide a safe and supportive environment for individuals experiencing mental health problems, and to help them access the appropriate resources and support they need to recover and manage their mental health effectively

The Student Council is a body of 8 elected students, and serves as a representative body for the student community. They work very hard to promote the interests of the students and enhance their overall experience at the school. Some of the ways that they do this are by organizing school events, addressing student concerns and issues, and collaborating with the School Leadership Team and teachers to create a positive and inclusive school community.



Fourth Layer of Support, Your Advisor

Each student will have an Advisor and the relationships between Advisor and Advisee is an essential part of the support system here at RCN. Your Advisor will help you with practical support throughout your academic journey, such as subject choices, organisation and CAS reflections, but they are so much more than that. An advisor is an integral part of the students' safety net, and sounding board, mediator, and confidante. They are therefore expected to be in regular contact with their advisee. Advisors contact with students provides the base of academic, extra-academic and emotional support



Fifth Layer of Support, the Geography of the Student Village

The geography of the Student and Staff Village is designed to provide access to support at all times of the night and day. House Leaders live in very close proximity to the Student Houses. Students can exit the Houses at any time of the day or night, and the door of the closest House Leader's home is a matter of metres from the door of each Student House.

Sixth Layer of Support, Lessons and Connect

Student's attendance at lessons, activities and services is expected, and absences noted and quickly followed up including by the Advisor and House Leader. During the evenings and over weekends students are less frequently monitored – there are fewer “natural” opportunities for this. But it remains a fundamental principle that every student who is not authorised to be absent for the night makes eye contact with a Member of Staff every evening during Connect. The eye contact, the tone of the student's voice, provides an opportunity for the member of staff to form a quick assessment if something is seriously amiss.



Seventh Layer of Support, Health Services

The Head of Health Services (a Certified Public Health Nurse) is responsible for leading and coordinating the student health provision at the College. During office hours (Monday to Friday 08 to 15.30), the College Nurse operates a clinic open to all students on a drop in basis, and is authorised to grant students permission to miss classes, activities and services if students are considered sick. The HoHC will make decisions as to when to refer the students to a Medical Doctor or another Health Professional. The nurse is also responsible for the coordination of treatments and or follow-up for students who access health services outside of the college.

The Head of Wellbeing is responsible for leading and coordinating the provision of student psychological support at the College. They run a daily clinic for students, and where necessary refers students to further professionals. They facilitate education and training in a range of psychoeducational areas for both students and staff and provides training and supervision for Peer Listeners.

Out of normal working hours students have access to student First Aiders, House Leaders and Peer Listeners for support with physical and mental health, as well as having access to the 24\7 on call number for medical advice 116117.

Eighth Layer of Support, Teachers

Teachers play a crucial role in the student support system at RCN. First, your teachers are responsible for teaching you- delivering lessons, supporting your learning and helping you to meet your full potential in their subject. With this basic role comes a great deal more. Your teachers will offer individual academic support, serve as mentors providing guidance and emotional support and help you to identify and address any challenges you may be facing whether academic or otherwise.

Ninth Layer of Support, Learning Support and University Counselling

The Learning Support team consists of Jimmy, Karen and Emma. Learning Support starts inside the classroom with subject teachers differentiating the learning tasks geared towards every student's needs and capabilities. Students who experience any learning challenges whether big or small during the learning process are more than welcome to approach any of the teachers in the Learning Support department, who will then assess the challenge and offer advice and support as necessary. These challenges might even just be with study skills, self-management skills, note taking etc

Mark Chalkley is our Senior University Counsellor here at UWC Red Cross Nordic. The main focus of his work is to assist and support students when they apply to colleges and universities. This includes leading workshops on how to write personal statements, helping students with all required documentation, writing counsellor recommendations in support of applications, giving advice about possible and appropriate schools to apply to, and aiding students in applying for financial aid. He has deep knowledge of how to apply to schools in different parts of the world and personal connections with admissions personnel at various institutions. For students to make the best possible decision on which universities they should attend after RCN, Mark also organises visits to our College from many universities across the globe, both online and in person.



Tenth Layer of Support, Emergency Contacts

There is a Member of Staff on call 24/7 with a duty phone. The house of the Community Life Leader is within the student village, and the house of the Rektor and Deputy Rektor are no more than five minutes' walk from the furthest Student House.



KEEPING YOURSELF HEALTHY AND WELL



Sleep

Getting enough sleep is essential for all of us. Without enough sleep your body and brain cannot function as they should, and your physical, emotional, and cognitive development will be negatively impacted.

Sleep helps support physical growth, including the development of muscle tissue, bone density, and organ function. During sleep, the body produces hormones that are essential for growth and development. Those who don't get enough sleep may be at a higher risk of developing chronic health conditions such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease.

Sleep also plays a critical role in cognitive development, including memory consolidation, problem-solving, and decision-making. By getting enough sleep you will actually be better able to learn and retain information, make good decisions, and perform well in your lessons and assessments. Sleep is also critical in emotional regulation, and without healthy sleep habits you can experience mood swings, irritability, and you are at a greater risk of anxiety and depression.

It will be easy when you arrive at RCN to fall out of healthy sleeping habits with the excitement of being in a new place and meeting so many new people. RCN is a busy community, and some students struggle with a fear of missing out in the first few weeks especially, and forget to take care of themselves. Think carefully about what you need to sleep well. Do you need quiet? Do you have a routine that helps you? How much sleep do you need to get to feel really energetic the next day? What stops you from sleeping? Make a plan for yourself- how can you keep up with your sleep so that you can get the most out of every day?





Food

Let's be honest, school food is never going to be perfect- no matter what school you attend. It is important to remember three things. First, the Kantina at RCN is staffed by wonderful people who work very hard to feed all of us three meals a day. Secondly, our community is made up of people from over 83 countries, so people are coming with very different ideas of what a “normal” meal looks like. Thirdly, this is a school in Norway, so the food is going to be typically Norwegian. This means lots of seafood, meats and hearty, warming dishes. Some of the typical Norwegian food that you will have is:

1. Fish: Norway is famous for its fish, including salmon, cod, and herring. At RCN we have many opportunities to eat fish!
2. Meat: Traditional Norwegian meat dishes include lamb and venison, but we also have beef, pork and chicken to suit other tastes. These meats are often cooked in stews or roasted with root vegetables.
3. Bread: Norway has a strong tradition of bread-making, with many different types of bread available, including flatbread, sweet bread, and rye bread. At every lunch there will be a selection of sliced bread, and there will be lots of opportunities to make breads and pizzas in the wood fired bakehaus as well.
4. Cheese: Norway is known for its cheese, including brunost, a sweet, caramel-like cheese made from whey.
5. Lefse: A traditional Norwegian flatbread, similar to a tortilla, made from potatoes, flour, and milk.
6. Krumkake: A thin, crispy wafer-like cookie, typically rolled into a cone shape and filled with whipped cream.
7. Fårikål: A traditional Norwegian dish made with lamb, cabbage, and potatoes, often served in the fall.
8. Kjøttkaker: Norwegian meatballs made with ground beef or pork, often served with potatoes.
9. Kransekake: A traditional Norwegian cake made from almond paste, often served at weddings and other special occasions.

One of the things that students sometimes struggle to adjust to is the typical lunches in Norway. A typical Norwegian school lunch usually consists of a sandwich, topped with cheese, meat or fish, and vegetables like lettuce, cucumber or tomato. It is not usual to have hot food at lunch in Norway, although we usually do have something here at RCN. Norwegian school lunches are great in that they are typically healthy and balanced, with a focus on whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables, and protein. There is always a salad bar at lunch, and for vegans and vegetarians there are always options for you at every meal.

In Norway the social aspect of mealtime is really important, and we encourage students to eat together in the Kantina, our communal dining area. This not only helps to build a sense of community, but also allows students to practise social skills and develop positive relationships with others.

Being a vegetarian or vegan at RCN may require a bit of effort, but it is absolutely possible. Here are a few tips that could help:

1. Let us know! Make sure that we know if you are going to be following a vegetarian or vegan diet while you are here, so that the Kantina can understand your dietary requirements and make the right arrangements for your meals.
2. Educate yourself about what makes a balanced and healthy vegetarian and vegan diet. That way you can put together the right balance of proteins, grains, carbohydrates from the options available.
3. Be flexible. There will always be vegetarian and vegan options, but sometimes it will not be your favourite foods. You can still eat a balanced diet.
4. Join the Food Committee and help influence the meal plans and options at RCN.

Remember that being vegetarian or vegan is a personal choice, and you have the right to follow your own beliefs and values. With a little effort and some creativity, you can be a vegan at a Norwegian school..





Exercise and Friluftsliv

Regular exercise is essential for your physical and mental wellbeing and can have positive effects on many aspects of your life. There is, of course, the obvious benefit of building and maintaining strong bones and muscles, improving cardiovascular health, and reducing the risk of a range of chronic diseases. But regular exercise and activity has many more benefits! For example, exercise has also been shown to have a positive effect on mental health by reducing symptoms of anxiety and depression, improving your mood, and boosting self-esteem. It is also a great way to relieve stress and can improve your ability to cope with difficult situations. Participating in physical activities such as team sports can help you develop social skills, build friendships, and feel a sense of belonging. There is even a benefit for your academic work, as exercise has been linked to improved cognitive function, including better memory, attention, and decision-making skills.

At RCN you will have the opportunity to take part in lots of team sports including football, basketball, running, volleyball, handball and badminton. There are some opportunities to compete in these sports, but the focus is mainly on fun and exercise. At RCN the real opportunities for exercise are found in the natural world around us.

The Norwegian approach to the outdoors and exercise is deeply ingrained in the country's culture and history. Norwegians have a strong connection to nature, and outdoor activities like hiking, skiing, and camping are popular pastimes. Friluftsliv is a term that you will hear often at RCN, and is a Norwegian word that translates to "open-air life" or "outdoor life." This is a concept that emphasises a connection with nature and the outdoors. This way of life promotes physical activity, adventure, and exploration of natural environments. Being in the outdoors comes with its own benefits to physical and mental health and improving your overall well-being.

Friluftsliv is not just a summer concept, but year round. Remember that there is no bad weather in Norway, only bad clothing! Friluftsliv is a commitment to celebrate time in the outdoors no matter your age, fitness level or the season and weather forecast. In the summer you can swim, in the winter you can ski. Friluftsliv is not only active sports like skiing and hiking, but anything that gives you space and live to be in the outdoors, watching the Northern Lights, laying in the grass, berry picking and laying in a hammock for an afternoon are all equally as valuable. So connect, calm down and clear your head by enjoying friluftsliv.



THE WELLBEING PROGRAMME



Wellbeing can mean a variety of things, but generally speaking wellbeing can be described as a state of balance and optimal functioning across different areas of your life, including physical, mental, emotional and social.

Throughout your first year at RCN you will take part in the Wellbeing Programme, which will include these topics:

Physical health: How can you take care of your physical health? This will include the importance of sleep, eating a balanced diet and staying physically active.


Emotional health: Learning to recognize and regulate your emotions, as well as build resilience and coping skills to deal with stress and adversity.

Communication: Being able to communicate your needs clearly and honestly, and listen when others do the same. Learning to make requests instead of demands, create collaborative agreements and engage in dialogue rather than argument.

Social connectedness: Feeling a sense of belonging and connectedness with your peers, family, and community and how to build these relationships and maintain them. Social support is crucial for your wellbeing.

Sense of purpose: Supporting you in developing a sense of purpose and direction in your lives, which can help you find meaning and motivation.

Autonomy, independence and responsibility: We know that you need to develop a sense of autonomy and independence, as you navigate the transition from childhood to adulthood. We will give you many opportunities to exercise this autonomy and independence, as well as helping you learn to make decisions and take responsibility for your decisions.



HELPING TO KEEP OTHERS HEALTHY AND WELL

What is Non Violent Communication?

Nonviolent Communication was developed by psychologist Marshall Rosenberg and is a strategy for communicating that emphasises empathy, honesty, and compassion. Rosenberg described it as a “language of life” that helps us to transform old patterns of defensiveness and aggressiveness into compassion and empathy and to improve the quality of all of our relationships, including with ourselves. We live in a world in which violence has become more and more accepted as the norm. It’s all around us. From wars between nations to crime on the street, and even imposing on our everyday existence, violence manifests itself both explicitly and implicitly, sometimes in subtle ways. Yet for many people, the very idea of violence seems foreign. They are not involved in physical confrontations or abuses, and thus they believe that violence is not present. But the reality is that whenever we become disconnected from our compassionate nature, whenever our hearts are not devoid of hatred in all of its forms, we have a tendency to act in ways that can cause pain for everyone in our lives, including ourselves.

Nonviolence, then, does not refer to the mere absence of physical harm. It is a way of life that takes its lead from a compassionate and connected heart, and can guide us toward a more complete and happy way of being. As Mahatma Gandhi said, *“Nonviolence is not a garment to be put on and off at will. Its seat is in the heart, and it must be an inseparable part of our very being.”* It is a practice rooted in understanding, in living honestly, and in acting empathically with all beings. Of course this starts with the self. We must first understand and act empathically towards ourselves in order to impact the world in wonderful and compassionate ways. This means cultivating nonviolence in every action and being present to our own needs and feelings in each and every moment.

(extract from <https://www.cnvc.org/online-learning/nvc-instruction-guide/nvc-instruction-guide>)

NVC is a central part of how we strive to communicate with one another here at RCN. During Induction Week you will take part in an introduction to NVC with the rest of your year group, focusing on the process of self-connection, communication and listening. We will also work as a community to practise some simple strategies in conflict resolution and making collaborative agreements which we will revisit in monthly communication workshops.

The benefits of NVC are many for our community. The first is that you will have a kinder relationship with yourself and more clarity on what you need and how to get it.

The second is that it helps to build positive relationships with others, which can create a more harmonious and supportive community. By using language that is non-judgmental and non-threatening, we can express ourselves more honestly and effectively, and listen more attentively to others, leading to a greater sense of connection and understanding.

Life at RCN can be busy, overwhelming and emotionally challenging at times, especially because you are away from your families and familiar support systems. Learning to understand what you need and recognizing and empathising with the emotions and needs of others will help to build positive social connections, honest relationships and a sense of inclusion and belonging.

NVC provides tools for resolving conflicts in a peaceful and productive way. By focusing on identifying and addressing underlying needs and feelings rather than blaming or criticising others, individuals can work together to find mutually beneficial solutions. Conflict can therefore be a positive experience, working to resolve a shared problem, instead of being combative and exclude others.

The purpose of this approach is to help you gain the skills and knowledge to build healthy habits, develop positive relationships, understand your own needs and the needs of others and create change in the world around you.

Here is how it works...

Think of a situation where you felt like you were not able to make yourself understood. Perhaps this was because you could not find the words, or perhaps this was because the other person was not willing to listen. Regardless, using the template below can help you communicate honestly and kindly, and gives the other person the opportunity to listen and really understand what you are asking from them.

As an example, I will give a situation I recently had with my 4 year old (Joshua).

1. Joshua, when I see that you have hidden my phone
2. I feel worried
3. Because I wonder if you have put it in the toilet again..
4. Would you be willing to tell me where you have put my phone?



Now try this with an example of your own:

- When I see that.....
- I feel.....
- Because I need
- Would you be willing to

ROOM AND HOUSE COLLABORATIVE AGREEMENTS

This basic NVC template will be used in many areas of our community life, including room and house collaborative agreements. These will be built together, and need to meet everyone's needs to be equitable and realistic. To do this, each of you in the room, and later the House, need to make really specific requests, and explain what needs you have that this request would meet. To do this, you need to be willing to listen and try to understand the requests others are making, and what needs they have.

NEEDS

Conditions necessary to thrive. Every human being has the same needs.

REQUESTS

Effective requests are expressed in positive, actionable language. This means requesting what you want, rather than what you don't want. They also contain specific details (times, etc.) so that the person knows exactly how to meet the needs. An example of this would be saying: "I'd like more time in the room when it is quiet" rather than "I don't want so much noise late at night."

LISTEN

Hearing what is said without guessing at what someone's motivations are and without assuming negative intentions. Most importantly, not thinking that you have to win or lose the conversation.

The goal is that everyone's needs are met and all voices are included. One key part of NVC is that you never negotiate on your needs, only the strategies for meeting them. Every member of your room deserves to have their basic needs met, without exception. There are always other ways to meet everyone's needs.

So think about what you wish to make your room and house a positive environment where you can thrive, and help others to do the same. Think of how you can make a positive request of your roommates that would meet both your needs and theirs. You can then take these back to your rooms and discuss, and once you have all found a set of requests that you can agree on, you can each sign the new room agreement. Here is a template that you can use, with an example.

Needs	Emotions if needs are met	Emotions if needs are not met	Request
Sleep	Energetic, Refreshed, Focused	Drained, Overwhelmed, Nervous	I would like to have enough quiet to sleep or study from 11pm until 6am.
Fun	Joyful, Content, Inspired	Lonely, Disconnected	I would like to invite some friends over one night this week for a movie and listen to music.

SOME NEEDS: THERE ARE MANY MORE!

Sleep, Food, Air, Sunlight, Touch, Health, Exercise, Stillness, Relaxation, Hope, Play, Challenge, Development, Inspiration, Consistency, Flexibility, Appreciation, To Matter, Respect, Consideration, Cooperation, Harmony, Unity, Peace, Partnership, Shared Reality, To Be Seen, To Be Understood, Trust, Acceptance, Openness, Connection, Companionship, Belonging, Inclusion, Community, Communication, Empathy, Compassion, Support, Celebration, Choice, Independence, Honesty, Responsibility, Purpose, Fulfilment, Meaning, Predictability, Space, Freedom, Self Care

SOME EMOTIONS WHEN NEEDS ARE MET

Energetic, Playful, Stimulated, Encouraged, Inspired, Relaxed, Refreshed, Grounded, Content, Fulfilled, Peaceful, Amused, Proud, Joyful, Warm, Affectionate, Compassionate, Calm, Satisfied, Hopeful, Grateful, Optimistic, Curious, Engaged, Enthusiastic, Excited, Alert, Aware, Focused, Certain, Confident, Determined

SOME EMOTIONS WHEN NEEDS ARE NOT MET

Drained, Bored, Disconnected, Uneasy, Stressed, Impatient, Overwhelmed, Guilty, Disappointed, Lonely, Hurt, Miserable, Grumpy, Irritated, Angry, Surprised, Nervous, Distressed, Hesitant, Troubled, Frustrated, Exhausted, Unfocused, Distant



UNDERSTANDING CONSENT AND SEXUAL ETIQUETTE



Adjusting to a residential school community where students have different ideas about sexual etiquette can be challenging, and this is a topic that does not always get introduced when you are starting a new school. There are a few things you can do to navigate this area.

Consent is an essential aspect of any physical encounter, including sex and other intimate contact. It refers to the act of giving permission or agreement for something to happen. Consent must be given voluntarily and enthusiastically by all parties involved, without any form of coercion or pressure. Consent is an ongoing process, which means that it must be continuously communicated and can be withdrawn at any time. This is true for holding hands, touching a shoulder, tickling, hugging, kissing and more intimate physical contact as well.

Sexual etiquette refers to the set of unwritten rules and social norms that govern how people should behave during sexual encounters. This includes things like respecting boundaries, communicating openly and honestly, and practising safe sex. Sexual etiquette also involves being mindful of the needs and preferences of your partner(s), and ensuring that everyone involved feels comfortable and respected. Additionally, it includes seeking affirmative and enthusiastic consent throughout any sexual activity.

In a way, at every moment, you are engaging in a microagreement, verbally or physically. Everyone involved needs to feel free and be able to say “no” or set a boundary, and trust that your “no” will be heard and respected. Take a moment to pay attention to the other person.

If you ever feel uncomfortable or unsure about a situation, don't hesitate to reach out to your House Leader, a trusted friend, roommate, Peer Listener or someone else for support. In such a diverse community, it is essential to understand that what is considered appropriate behavior in one culture may be seen as inappropriate or even offensive in another. Therefore, it is crucial to approach interactions with an open mind and a willingness to learn and adapt to the norms of the community as a whole. One important way to promote healthy sexual etiquette in our community includes being consistently respectful of others' boundaries and not assuming that everyone shares the same views or preferences when it comes to sexual behavior. You need to be open to communicating clearly and honestly about your own boundaries and desires, while also being receptive to others' communication about their boundaries and desires. It is never acceptable to coerce or pressure another into actions they do not want to take, and this includes peer pressure or pressure from those in positions of power or authority. It is also important for you to be aware that our community members have a wide range of cultural and legal understandings about sexual behavior.

Boundaries speak about the needs and desires and cultural background of the person who sets them. They are not a reflection or rejection of you. When you hear a “no,” try to connect to what the other person is saying “yes” to, what needs they are trying to meet.

Ultimately, creating a culture of respect, open communication, and consent is key to promoting healthy sexual etiquette in a community made up of people from diverse cultural backgrounds.



MOST IMPORTANTLY!

I know that this booklet contains a great deal of information, and it may feel a bit overwhelming. The most important thing that you will read in this entire booklet is this:

There will be ups and downs, joys and frustrations, new friends, new experiences and new opportunities. Your time at RCN will be whatever you make of it, and the key is to throw yourself in and participate fully in life here. When things get confusing or hard just reach out for help and we will catch you.

We are so very excited to meet you in August, and to welcome you into this amazing community.

