



RGS ESTD
1562
HIGH WYCOMBE

Moving into Year 8 2024/25

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Introduction

As a student goes through RGS, they follow three stages of educational studies. Years 7, 8 and 9 complete our Key Stage 3 courses. Many GCSE subjects now also begin preparation in Year 9. Years 10 and 11 are Key Stage 4 courses and lead to GCSE examination level. Finally, there is the two-year A level course in the Sixth Form.

As they are moving into Year 8 we thought it helpful to give you some general information about the next year.

Mr McDonald-Smith will be the Head of Year for Years 8 and 9 and any information that current Year 7 Form Tutors and Head of Year have about them will be passed on to Mr McDonald-Smith. It is our intention that they settle into their new year as positively as possible.

We thought it helpful if you too were aware in advance of some Year 8 important information.

Forms and Form Tutors

Students will remain in House form groups and be put in new classes. They will have a new Form Tutor at the beginning of Year 8. Inevitably, they will find that they are in classes with some students they do not know well, and we encourage them to take this opportunity to maintain Year 7 friendships and to also make new ones. The Year 8 Form Tutors, Head of Year and subject staff watch over this process carefully and take opportunities wherever possible to encourage these new friendships amongst the students. They will remain in the same form groups for Years 8 and 9 and it is our aim that they should also have the same Form Tutor and Head of Year for the two years too.

Form Tutors' Meetings

There will be a Virtual Form Tutor Meeting on Monday 14 October 2024, when you will have the opportunity to meet the Form Tutor and to discuss how your child has settled into Year 8. If you wish to contact the Form Tutor at any time, we recommend that you do this by email in the first instance. The Form Tutor will send a letter of introduction to you early in September.

Parents' Meeting

There will be a Virtual Parents' Meeting for Year 8 on Wednesday 30th April 2025. More information about how to book this will follow closer to the time.

Action Your Potential

The RGS has partnered with Action Your Potential (AYP), for a second year. The AYP team inspires, informs, educates, and enthuses students, parents and carers as well as school staff, in learning all about our incredible brains. Using innovative and easy-to-follow metacognitive strategies, Action Your Potential will support our whole school community to change our brain, change our minds and change our worlds. They help people to live in their brains with greater awareness, deploying daily strategies to improve their experience.

AYP use the latest neuroscience in workshops (for students, parents, and staff), 1:1 and small group coaching and videos on their #NeuroNinja Learning Hub to help everyone across the RGS community to learn about their brain. AYP will work with each of our year groups throughout the year as well as presenting to parents and carers and staff. The goal is to help students learn 14 #NeuroNinja skills divided into 4 strands of personal development:

1. Learning that wellbeing is a skill
2. Unleashing learning
3. Mind management
4. Managing relationships and behaviour

Curriculum

In Year 8, students will continue with a similar curriculum to Year 7 except they will now add a second language or Classical Civilisation. Students will be taught in groups based on their language options for most lessons. Some practical subjects, which are taught in a rotation group, are taught in smaller groups. There is no setting in any subject in Year 8. The following is a summary of what is covered in each subject in Year 8.

Art

The Built environment: Students look at traditional and contemporary architecture, specifically designs that have been inspired by nature. As the project progresses, students develop an understanding of perspective and produce a series of personal and imaginative artworks including drawing, photography, collage and 3D cardboard construction.

Art and Society: Students look at the “human image” in society as an inspiration for art. There are individual and collaborative projects based on ancient and multi-cultural influences as a source for three-dimensional art.

Digging up the Past: This is a collaborative project with the History Department. The students gain a greater understanding of cultural identity. They study and respond to the range of artefacts and fossils that are exhibited in The Pitt Rivers Museum and Museum of Natural History. They produce a variety of media responses, develop graphic specific techniques, including typography, whilst improving and expanding upon a wide variety of practical skills informed by the formal elements.

Biology

In Year 8, students complete KS3 by the end of the year. Topics that may be covered are:

- Fitness and Health (Diet, Heart and Circulation, Locomotion, Drugs and Alcohol)
- Food and Digestion
- Animal Reproduction
- Plants and Photosynthesis

Chemistry

Building on the fundamentals covered in Year 7, Year 8 covers most of the remainder of Key Stage 3 Chemistry. The following topics will be studied:

- pH and indicators
- Acids, bases and neutralisation
- Patterns of reactivity – reactivity series, displacement reactions, metal extraction

- Fuels and global warming
- Rocks and environmental chemistry
- Useful chemistry e.g. advanced materials, voltaic cells

Classical Civilisation

Students will study various aspects of ancient culture and history. Among the topics usually studied are: Minoan and Mycenaean culture, Greek theatre and drama including comedy and tragedy, the birth of democracy, Greek mythology and the world of heroes, Greek religion and ancient art. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to be creative and to express their own opinions. The wide range of topics means there is something to suit all interests and learning styles.

Computing

The course builds on from the foundations started in Year 7. They start the year learning in part what a computer is and how computers operate on a low-level using assembly language and the Littleman Computer simulation. The course then introduces students to computational thinking where they develop applications and solve problems using Flowgorithm and Building your own Blocks as a stepping-stone to learning text-based programming languages in Year 9. The students then have the chance to apply their skills learning the basic constructs of the Python programming language and writing pseudocode and trying this on an emulator.

Design and Technology

Snapper (litter picker)

Students learn how basic mechanisms such as levers and linkages are able to reduce the effort needed to move loads and how types of movement may be changed from input to output. The module teaches students how anthropometric data is used in developing sizes and how ergonomic considerations improve the safety and function of products. Students further develop their manufacturing skills, this time working with manufactured boards and polymers. Finished products are tested and evaluated with user opinion to determine further modifications.

Night Light

Continuing from the earlier basic electronics work, covered in the Eco Lamp, students learn how light sensor circuits work using a light dependent resistor (LDR),

preset resistors and a transistor, as well as other more familiar components such as LEDs. The module also involves plastic forming processes to make the circuit housing including finishing acrylic, vacuum forming HIPs and chemical welding polymers together. The module also re-visits, further developing, a range of design-based skills such as isometric projection drawing and the use of the CAD program, Onshape.

Drama

The Drama module in Year 8 consists of improving group skills: communication, confidence and vocal expression, as well as learning lines and Drama terminology. The students also look at whole group performance, scripted plays and the performance of Shakespeare.

English

In Year 8, students continue to develop their understanding of English Literature through an exploration of novels, poetry and Shakespeare. The course aims to build on existing skills, helping students to develop their essay structures, and weaving in key contextual elements in line with the GCSE curriculum that they are building towards.

They begin the course by developing their creative writing through the 'Poetry about Identity: Finding a Voice' unit, enabling them to explore key poetic forms and devices in an insightful and imaginative way.

In their exploration of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, students encounter challenging themes of love, fate and family honour, as well as studying complex Shakespearean features such as iambic pentameter, building a firm foundation for their studies of Shakespeare in their later years.

The Year 8 end of year exam is a passage-based Literature essay on the *The Pearl* by John Steinbeck; this essay requires close-reading analytical skill as well as the application of key contextual ideas to the analysis of the passage – both crucial skills at GCSE. Students continue with a weekly Library lesson throughout the year and are expected to read at least six books in each term, completing Accelerated Reader quizzes as they did in Year 7. We, as a department, are always grateful for your support regarding reading at home. We encourage all students to read

independently every day – it should be part of their daily routine. They should discuss their reading with their teachers and the school librarian, seeking help in selecting books that will inspire them.

French

We continue to build on the grammar covered in Year 7 and begin to talk about things in the future and things in the past. We look at the use of adjectives and word order, and introduce reflexives for the first time. In year 8 students will keep on using all four language skills (reading, listening, writing and speaking) and develop their translating skills as well. We work on a variety of topics from the French-speaking world, including food and drink, European countries, the Tour de France, School in francophone countries and Louis XIV- “the Sun King”. Even in Year 8, the skills feed directly into the work that the students will do at GCSE. We have a variety of interactive resources at our disposal which help them to build up their skills and maintain motivation in French.

German

In Year 8, students practise the four main skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening in equal measure. The topics covered include a recap of the basics from Year 7, family, school life, free time, talking about where you live, and food and drink. Building on the Year 7 introductory course, all of these topics allow students to gain further cultural insights into the German speaking world. We place great emphasis on teaching our pupils to communicate in German, to give opinions and justify their answers. The present and future tenses are covered, and we concentrate on word order in sentences, adjectival endings and an introduction to the German case system. Even at this early stage, the activities practised are reflected in those required at GCSE, across all four skills. Lessons and homework tasks make use of a variety of interactive activities to enhance the students’ language learning and their motivation for and engagement in German.

Geography

In Year 8, we will be exploring the Key Skills of description, explanation and assessment through places across the world.

First is the **Hydrological Cycle** topic where we explore the water cycle on a local scale. We look into the classic formations of a river, and how flooding may impact us in the UK. Through recent events and research, we assess how and why some areas have been hit particularly hard by storms and consider how the impacts of flooding can be managed.

Rocks and Energy Issues encompasses the creation and use of fossil fuels and renewable energy in the world. We research energy within the UK and the impact it is having on our environment and economy.

Next, we look at **Population Issues** which lets us explore how areas are experiencing population growth at different rates. We look into why this is happening and explore why migration patterns exist. We also explore the impacts of migration on both the host and destination countries.

Next, we explore one of David Attenborough's favourite environments, the **Oceans**. In this topic, we discuss plastics and how they impact our oceans on a local and global scale and crucially, the strategies used to reduce the amount of plastic in our oceans. We explore in depth how human activity is damaging, and also trying to save our natural habitats through the use of marine protected areas.

Finally, we look at **Tropical Rainforests**, learning about the flora and fauna in the area and how they are impacted by activities such as gold mining and deforestation. Some very interesting assessment of how necessary these activities taking place are, and discussion surrounding how best to tackle the issues.

History

Year 8 History begins in the turbulent world of late medieval England, when Richard III seized the throne and became one of the most vilified kings in our history. The curriculum then explores aspects of the Tudor Dynasty, including the driving force of religion in bringing about change. Students will also decide whether Queen Elizabeth I deserved her magnificent reputation. The focus then moves to Britain's role in the Atlantic Slave Trade and the year finishes by looking at who should be considered Britain's greatest democratic hero.

Latin

In Year 8, students continue their studies using the Suburani course. They will build on their understanding of vocabulary and grammar; key linguistic features that will be studied include the forms of verbs including present and past tenses, nouns and adjectives. The primary aim is an ability to comprehend and translate passages of increasing complexity in Latin. The Suburani course develops and practises pupils' ability to translate stories while also covering various aspects of Roman life and culture such as chariot racing, mythological tales and beliefs, the public baths, religion and slavery.

Mathematics

Mathematics in Year 8 seeks to build upon the Year 7 syllabus as topics get reinforced and extended. The Year 8 syllabus is derived from the KS3 National Curriculum and supplemented by additional topics which we believe interest and stretch the mathematically talented cohorts in RGS. Topics include:

- Number: Divisibility Rules, Prime Factorisation and HCF/LCM, Percentages of Quantities and Increase/Decrease, Fraction Arithmetic, Standard Form
- Algebra: Algebraic Expressions, Linear Equations of all types, Linear Inequalities, Linear nth term, Sequences, straight line graphs of $y=mx+c$, expanding brackets, factorising algebraic expressions, expanding the product of two brackets, factorising quadratic expressions
- Shape, Space and Measure: Similarity and Congruency, Pythagoras' Theorem, Circumference and Area of Circles, Volume and Surface Area of Prisms, Transformations, Constructions, Trigonometry
- Handling Data, Probability and Statistics: Mutually exclusive outcomes and two variable sample spaces, scatter graphs and correlation, statistics of frequency tables
- Ratio: Map Ratios, Scale Drawing, Linear and Inverse Proportion
- All Year 8 students will be entered for the Junior Maths Challenge around April.

An outline Scheme of Work is available to view through Google Classroom. Students are directed to online resources for homework tasks throughout the year and will become familiarised with various online platforms, and also as they prepare for the end of year examinations.

Music

During Year 8 Music lessons, students naturally continue building on the skills and theoretical knowledge built in Year 7, whilst continuing to develop a love for music-making and a more nuanced sense of musicality, where genres are seen in context.

In Year 8, students start with a unit about the Orchestra from its origins in the Baroque period through to the relevance of the orchestra in the modern day. Students explore playing famous Classical music such as Mozart Symphony 40 and the Nutcracker in an ensemble setting and have the opportunity to try out some of the orchestral instruments on offer here at RGS.

The second half of Year 8 focusses on composing. Students will study the American Minimalist movement as well as how Minimalism is used in film. They then move on to studying electronic dance music and compose music using Bandlab on their Chromebooks.

Physical Education & Games

We have an ambitious, stimulating and challenging vision to deliver a high quality and inclusive programme. We create an environment that supports and nurtures all students to develop a high sense of self-worth and the character to contribute positively to society. We want our students to have developed the motivation, confidence and competence to thrive through a healthy and physically active lifestyle.

All great journeys start with the *'End in Mind'*. This means that we establish a clear vision with our students on where they want to get to with Physical Education and Games and we set about supporting them to achieve that vision by teaching the desired skills and knowledge from the very start of the RGSHW journey. We adopt a variety of activities to provide a broad and balanced experience that is tailored to the individual needs of each student within a safe, inspiring and inclusive environment. This allows all students to regularly learn the *'End in Mind'* skills and knowledge and maximise their development and enjoyment within Physical Education and Games. Our Athletic Development Coaches provide further support throughout this process as additional members of staff in lessons.

<i>'End in Mind' – Skills and Knowledge</i>				
<i>A skill is a complex performance – drawing on what is known</i>				
The RGSHW Way	Health and Well being	Athletic Development	Beat the Game	Actions
Resilient	Sleep	Energy System	Individually	Strike
Grounded	Nutrition	Foundational Movement	Collaboratively	Throw
Selfless	Mindset	Creative movement	Rules	Receive
Honest	Safety	Power Production	Tactical principles	Kick
Work Ethic	Exercise	Speed of Movement	Additional roles	Carry

Activities	Examples and Adapted Versions
Invasion games	Handball, Aussie Rules, Basketball, Rugby, Hockey
Net & Wall Games	Badminton, Volleyball, Tennis, Table Tennis, Squash
Target Games	Dodgeball and Derivatives
Athletic Development	Energy Systems, Foundational Movement, Creative Movement, Power Production, Speed of Movement
Gymnastics	Holds, Rolls, Rotations, Routines
Athletics	Track and Field – Traditional and Creative Methods
Strike and Field	Softball, Rounders, Cricket
Outdoor Adventure	Capture the Flag, Orienteering, Team Challenges
Swimming	Stroke Development, Water Safety, Water Polo

Physics

The students study the following topics:

Light:

- Drawing ray diagrams to show how light travels
- Law of reflection
- Describing and explaining refraction
- How colours mix, how filters work and how we see coloured objects.

Energy Transfers:

- Energy types and transfers
- Conservation of Energy
- Methods of heat transfer (conduction, convection, radiation)
- Particle model.

Circuits and Potential Difference:

- Definition of voltage
- Energy changes in circuits
- Rules to work out voltage in series and parallel circuits
- Connecting circuits to measure voltage.

Pressure:

- What is meant by pressure?
- Calculations involving force, pressure and area
- Pressure in liquids and gases.

Density:

- Floating or sinking
- Calculations involving density, mass and volume
- Measuring density.

Magnetism:

- What a magnet is and how it behaves
- How to make a magnet

- The properties of magnetic fields
- Properties and uses of electromagnets.

PSHCE

In PSHCE, Year 8 students cover three areas which are: Health and Well-being, The Wider World, and Relationships and Sex Education. The aim in PSHCE is to create a safe environment where students can share ideas and have their questions answered so that they can be both physically and emotionally prepared for the world.

These units include work and discussions on:

Health and Well-being

- Becoming an adult
- Your rights and the rights of your parents and carers
- Recreational drugs and addiction to prescribed medicine
- Smoking and alcohol
- Mental health and well-being
- Stress management
- Resilience including anger management, jealousy/fear
- Optional unit on risk taking behaviour including piercing and tattoos

Wider World

- Introduction to politics
- British moral values with a focus on prejudice
- Blood donation: Why do people give blood?
- Organ donation and assumed consent
- Stem cell transplantation
- Remembrance

RSE*

- Different types of relationship
- Parents and family
- Close relationships and sexual preference
- Contraception
- STIs and health clinics

- Sexting and the law
- Respect and consent in sexual relationships
- Trust and commitment
- Abusive relationships

Character Education

- Why is character important
- Values
- Practical wisdom and flourishing
- Mini project based on the RGS character framework

Character Development

The diagram illustrates the RGS Character Development Framework. It features three hexagonal icons at the top, each containing a stylized symbol. Below each icon is a core value: RESPECT, INTEGRITY, and ASPIRATION. Each value is accompanied by a descriptive paragraph and a reflective question in a blue-bordered box. At the bottom, a larger blue-bordered box contains the text 'Practical Wisdom', which is supported by a paragraph of text above it.



RESPECT

We **respect** all people and offer them **kindness, empathy** and are **accepting** of our differences.

Do I enable others to feel a sense of belonging?



INTEGRITY

We strive for **integrity** and act with **courage, humility** and **honesty**.

Am I living a good and right life?



ASPIRATION

We **aspire** for excellence and approach each day with an **open and curious mind, determination** and **resilience**.

Am I reaching my full potential?

We listen thoughtfully, reflect **critically** and speak with confidence about what we are learning. We **lead selflessly, serve compassionately** and **embrace innovation** in a rapidly changing world.

Practical Wisdom

Religious Studies

RS lessons will focus on the Philosophy of Religion. We will begin with a unit of study on the Existence of God, including an exploration of what we mean by ‘God’. We will then think about whether there can be a life after death, the Problem of Evil, and Science and Religion. Students will develop analytical skills and learn how to ask questions in a way that builds or challenges philosophical arguments.

Spanish

In Year 8, students practise the four main skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening in equal measure. The topics covered include family, hobbies, house, places in town and school life. We place great emphasis on teaching the pupils to communicate in Spanish as much as possible, allowing them to express their opinion on a variety of topics. Lessons are highly interactive with a wide variety of activities designed to increase student motivation and engagement in Spanish. The present and future tense is covered, and we concentrate on constructing sentences along with adjectival agreements. Even at this early stage, the activities practised are reflected in those required at GCSE. Furthermore, we encourage use of IT to enhance their learning of the language. A large aspect of learning Spanish also involves learning about Hispanic culture, and students will have the opportunity to delve deeper into the widely varied and unique customs and celebrations of Spanish-speaking countries, such as Day of the Dead.

Co-Curricular Education

Character Education forms an integral part of life at RGS HW and our Co-Curricular goal is to support students in learning to understand the importance of our values, Respect, Integrity and Aspiration, as well as the value of your physical and emotional well-being.

We want to ensure that all students can access and take part in academic activities outside of the normal timetabled day, through our numerous clubs and societies as well as being inspired to take part in a considerable number of offsite opportunities and trips.

Educational and Development trips, Clubs and Co-Curricular activities are displayed on our school website. All Co-Curricular information is sent home as a collective document at the start of the year to assist planning. The RGS is an exceptional school, in large part due to the effort that is made to offer a wide variety of trips, clubs and co-curricular activities, and we strongly encourage you to participate in these as much as you can. If you have any questions, please contact Mr Clatworthy on dec@rgshw.com (my door is also always open to students so please stop by).

Finally, we hope this information has been helpful to you and we wish you and your child a very relaxing and enjoyable summer. School resumes for Year 8 students on Thursday 5 September at 8.40am.

Mr A McDonald-Smith

Head of Year 8/9

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(2024/2025)