

HEADMASTER'S LETTER

12 September 2024



Dear Parent

WELCOME

It has been a pleasure to welcome new Year 7 students and around 40 new Sixth Formers to RGS as well as a few new boys in Years 8, 9 and 10. I know that they will find great reward during their time with us.

Many congratulations to last year's Year 11 and Upper Sixth on their excellent examination results. These results were achieved due to the hard work and commitment of our young people, the teaching and support staff delivering a strong curriculum and, I feel certain, the support of parents. As I said in the first assembly, our students should be very proud to be a part of a school where achievement is celebrated and supported by strong pastoral care.

COMMUNICATION

I write a Headmaster's Letter around twice a month. It is generally a round-up of activities, celebrations and my musings on aspects of RGS life. I do not routinely write about operational matters, apart from at the start of the year, as I am going to do now with a few points.

Currently, we have 'School Comms' on Mondays and Thursdays. I introduced this in my first week at the school (when I was also a new parent) and became tired, rather quickly, of being bombarded with emails every day. There is a lot of traffic. It is therefore essential for parents to keep on top of the information which comes from the School. Most 'letters' come through School Comms, though there are other systems used on occasion. Letters are posted on the School Website [Parent Letters 2023 - 2024](#) if they apply to the whole school or a year group.

Do follow me (RGSHeadmaster) on X (Twitter) @RGSHW - this is an instant update on activities; I retweet the posts of departments, so you can follow those too.

OTHER POINTS

Thank you for your support in purchasing the right uniform/dress code. Most of our students dress smartly and know that they are expected to do so - they looked very impressive in assembly last week. I've asked staff to take a firm line on white socks and that panacea for all podiatric ailments - the trainer! Trainers should not be worn at all unless their use is backed up by some medical evidence; in the case of 'lost shoes' (which seem to sprout legs more readily than the prized pair of trainers!) their use should be kept to a minimum.

Please encourage your son to get organised 'the night before' - this hopefully will keep the need for you to make emergency missions to Reception (whose staff then have to do the same) with forgotten laptops, lunchboxes to a minimum.

NEW PARENTS

I was very pleased to meet so many Year 7 parents at the event which finally became a coffee morning once the urns were working properly. Your sons do seem to have settled in well and boys are becoming more confident by the day, learning the RGS ways as they find their way around the School and understand the routines of a large institution. I will be meeting my first round of 'Birthday Boys' on Friday as I celebrate the 12th birthday of the boys who will, in seven years' time, be the oldest in the school! I would encourage all parents to allow their son to join the residential event at Phasels Wood. It is a really important bonding event, complementing the Sports' Camp that many students attended in the summer. It is such fun and, of course, we use the opportunity to embed our RGS values to boot. On Thursday 26 September, we are holding our Year 7 Welcome Evening. You will get the opportunity to meet again with other parents, Mr Durning and I will talk more about RGS life and there will be a presentation by the Parents' Association, who will be providing refreshments.

STAFF AT RGS

Our staff, both teaching and support, go the extra mile to support students. They are well-qualified and have huge strengths in their respective fields. I know that they are looking forward to working with RGS families this year. You'll be aware that staff come into work for a few days before 'school' starts. As well as preparing for the year ahead, I shared the School's priorities for the year (see photo). Staff also have undertaken training in the use of Google, Oracy and a number of modules on Health and Safety, GDPR and Online Safety. All staff have completed their full safeguarding training - there is nothing more important than ensuring that young people are safe.

There is a [staff list](#) on the School website. The School's Safeguarding and Pastoral Team are:

DSL: Mr Durning

ADSL: Mr Scourfield, Mrs Herath and Matron

HoYs: Mr Durning, Mr McDonald-Smith, Mr Carr, Mr Gallagher, Mrs Byrd, Mr Chitham-Mosley, Mr Sheehan

CONTACTING STAFF

We have very good relationships with parents - long may that continue. Staff are only too happy to help and understand the need for early intervention. Staff are asked to reply to parents within 48 hours at most, but are not expected to reply in the evening. Unless it is a safeguarding or very serious issue, or you have previously built that mutual relationship with one of your son's teachers, please do not email staff in the evening or at weekends (use a delay function if necessary). Sometimes, frustration can get the better of any of us; I do expect staff to be treated with courtesy and respect, so do take a deep breath before pressing 'send'. You may be sure that staff will do the same.

THE FORTH BRIDGE

A significant amount of refurbishment has taken place over the summer:

- a number of classrooms and workspaces have had a refresh
- the old School Shop has been fitted out as a permanent home for our rowing machines
- we have started work on a new pedestrian gate system and location; planning permission has been submitted so we are very much at the mercy of the Council now

Following a successful Government grant of nearly £1m awarded in the spring, we are continuing with the replacement of fire doors and the replacement of the roof above the Queen's Hall and Junior Block. At half term, we plan to redecorate the stairs and landing of the Junior Block. I don't believe this has been done for 30-40 years; recently, a group of Old Wycombienisians, who toured the school, demonstrated palpable nostalgia for the area and remarked on it being 'just as it was'.

FINALLY...

Congratulations to our Year 9 students Jeevun Ahluwalia and Daniel Sherratt who achieved their Bronze Crest Awards last term. This national award recognises over 10 hours of independent scientific planning, research, experimentation, analysis and evaluation on a topic of the students' choice. Daniel and Jeevun investigated the topical issue of how to grow food crops in areas with intermittent rainfall and increasing periods of drought - highly relevant in light of the problems caused by climate change.

I wish your families a long and productive relationship with RGS and your son all the very best for the year ahead.

With best wishes.

Philip Wayne