



## HEADMASTER'S LETTER

10 February 2025

### Goodbye to:

Stacey Jones who has been our most capable Receptionist, a very warm and friendly greeting offered to visitors and the many parents and students who arrive daily to drop off and collect all manner of personal effects. We wish Stacey well as she returns, with her family, to her home city of York.

### Welcome

A very warm welcome to Craig Catling, who has joined the Geography Department and to Will Gardner, who has joined the Sports Department as a Graduate Coach. We are also pleased to welcome Stephanie Saul who has started work as our School Receptionist.

### Welcome back to....

Julia Gregson, who is standing in for a few weeks to help out in Cookery; Richard Atkin and Za Hussenbux who have returned to support the Mathematics department following the departure of a teacher just before Christmas.

### Rowing

As one of only ten or so state schools that offer rowing and probably the only one without a river in walking distance from the school gates, we are exceedingly proud of our provision. The Royal Grammar School, High Wycombe Boat Club, to call it by its official name, has been running for 70 years. It was fitting, therefore, that we should celebrate this event with a Seventieth Anniversary Dinner. It was super to see so many rowers, parents and staff both past and present. As I had to attend another function on the same night, I missed the keynote speech given by Olympian Sholto Carnegie, but I have heard very good reports!

### CCF

As if one dinner was not enough for me that weekend, I also felt very privileged to have been invited to the CCF 'Mess' Dinner. An excellent three course meal, prepared and served by an Executive Chef from the independent school arm of our Catering Company was enjoyed by a number of staff and twelve NCO's (students). Fortified by conviviality, staff officers talked the cadets through a traditional mess dinner and its protocols, including the 'pass the port' routine with parental permission, minus, of course, the cigars! The students demonstrated exceeding levels of courtesy and respect for their officers and for the occasion. It really was an absolute pleasure.

### School Restaurant

The School Restaurant is a victim of its own success, particularly on Wednesdays, when the legendary roast is served and, likewise, on Fridays when it's fish and chips. We've had concerns about the overwhelm caused to younger boys (and this was raised several times in the recent parent survey) so we have a new system in place whereby Years 7-9 are served at break time in the Restaurant, with the 'Snack Shack' being open for Years 10 and 11. The reverse is in place at lunchtime. Whilst this has, unsurprisingly, not led to universal lauds from our older students, it has led to a calmer environment. We will continue to monitor the situation. We are working with the caterers to improve Sixth Form food provision from September. A reminder that all students may eat a packed lunch in the School Restaurant.

### Entrance Gate

When I arrived at RGS in 2015, the school site was open. It was not unusual to see joggers or dog walkers using the school as a public park! It's hard to imagine that situation, ten years later. Our entrance gate has, however, been unreliable and together with it being a distance from Reception, we have moved the gate close to the vehicle gates which lead into School House. After half term, this will be the main entrance for visitors and staff. The Chadwick Street gate will still be in operation, but students who enter and leave via Hamilton Road will use the new gate. This will be a safeguarding improvement, first and foremost, but will also give a better impression for those visiting the school for the first time.

### Character

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Philip Wayne

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Mr Wilson, Deputy Headmaster, has provided an update on our Character Education programme:

*'Our Character Development Framework is at the heart of our vision for an exceptional, well-rounded education. It is designed to equip students with the vital skills and qualities necessary to flourish in all aspects of life. Last term, we were inspired by student assemblies exploring themes like kindness, empathy, and courage, complemented by valuable staff insights. This term, we've built on this foundation by encouraging students to consider the broader purpose of education, extending beyond academics.'*

*Half of Year 8 has already completed a dedicated character module, engaging in meaningful reflection on their experiences. All students have participated in form-time discussions on qualities such as open-mindedness and curiosity, drawing inspiration from thought-provoking quotes such as Plato's "I am the wisest man alive, for I know one thing, and that is that I know nothing."*

*We are delighted to announce the upcoming launch of our Character Prospectus next term, which will provide a comprehensive overview of our framework. We encourage you to look out for its release.*

*Underpinning our commitment to character development, two staff members are currently pursuing Masters and Ph.D. degrees in related fields. This ensures we are incorporating the latest research on human flourishing and well-being into our approach. We remain dedicated to nurturing the full potential of every student, both academically and pastorally.'*

### **Training Day and Half Term**

A reminder that we have a Staff Training Day on Friday; staff will be looking at the art of adaptive teaching and questioning in the classroom. The School closes for students, therefore, at 1500 this Thursday. I wish the whole RGS community a very relaxing half-term holiday and safe skiing for those heading for the slopes.

### **House Music**

This event takes place tomorrow evening. There has been a good deal of industry in the Music Department with rehearsals taking place. It looks to be an excellent evening. The Adjudicator is OW Leo Mumby, who studied Music after leaving the Sixth Form and is now a Music Director in the West End.

### **Finally, a re-run from my previous letter about forthcoming sporting events.**

#### **Rugby Semi Final - Aylesbury RFC 1 March 1545**

Our Senior Rugby Squad have reached the Semi-Final of the Continental Tyres Schools Cup (which was formerly known as the 'Nat West Trophy' and, before that the 'Daily Mail Cup'). It is a truly magnificent achievement and one which deserves our full support. The semi takes place at Aylesbury Rugby Club at 1545 on 1 March. I hope that as many students and parents as possible will make an effort to cheer our lads on. The School will have some coach seats available and the Sports Department will be in contact with students about that. [Match centre | Rugby Football Union](#)

#### **Easter Sports Camp**

Now in its third year, this popular event for Years 7 and 8 is an excellent way to keep your son fit (and occupied) over the Easter holiday! Outdoor adventure, invasion games, strike and field games, net games and team challenges are all included in the three days from 8-10 April. Booking closes on 28 February. Click here [Easter Sports Camp](#) for further information.

#### **Bat Oar Ball**

Our popular black-tie dinner will take place in the Queen's Hall on Saturday 26 April 2025. This is not only an evening of socialising, dining and dancing, alongside friends and parents, but also a vital opportunity to contribute to supporting all sixteen sports at the school. RGSHW takes pride in its rich history and tradition of sporting excellence. Sports play a crucial role in the curricular, co-curricular and social fabric of the school. Tickets are available on [Little Box Office](#) until Friday 28 March. Secure your tickets now and be a part of a night that celebrates the spirit of sportsmanship at RGS!

With best wishes

**Philip Wayne**