

## HEADMASTER'S LETTER 12 September 2019



Dear Parent

### WELCOME and WELCOME BACK

Welcome back to all boys and staff following the six-week holiday. A very warm welcome, too, to new boys and their families. I hope that you all make the most of every opportunity afforded by RGS and play as full a part in school life as you can. We are oversubscribed, as we have been for the last few years, which is a good place to be. We are also pleased to welcome new boarders who will make Fraser Youens their home during the week and, in some cases, at the weekend too.

Term has got off to a good start and it has been super to see RGS getting into the rhythm of the school year.

We aim to communicate well with parents. I write a 'Headmaster's Letter' two to three times each half term. All letters are sent out on Monday or Thursday and are published on the School website [www.rgshw.com](http://www.rgshw.com). The RGS app is a useful resource. You may also like to follow us on Twitter @rgshw - this is my account from which you can get access to departmental accounts. In the case of an emergency (such as a school closure) an email will be sent out in a timely fashion and the information will be posted on the School website.

Staff are busy, but will always aim to respond to your concerns in a timely fashion. Please do bear in mind that there will be days when staff are teaching all day and may not get to emails until the boys have gone home. Many staff are parents and understand the urgencies and frustrations of the school/home interface but they, too, are only human and much prefer polite emails to get the communication off to a good start!

### NEW STAFF

A warm welcome to all the new staff - teachers, graduate trainee teachers and support staff.

### EXAM RESULTS

- **GCSE**

Last year, after a number of years with around 63 % of grades being awarded at 9-7 (or A\*-A, in old money) we were very pleased to hit 73 %. We were delighted this year to have repeated that success with a similar number of 9-7 grades. These results put us as the highest performing school with boys in it in the county, second only to Dr Challoner's Girls High School. It is important for us to celebrate overall achievement, remembering of course that the 'big picture' is made up of individual results. Many congratulations to all boys who achieved well. We have been joined, in the Sixth Form, by around 35 young men from other schools rendering it the largest Year 12 for a number of years.

- **A LEVEL**

A level results were also pleasing – with 73 % A\*-B, consistent with the last few years. We are delighted that most of our boys achieved a university place of choice. We wish them every success in the next phase of their lives.

## **MATTHEW HALE RIP**

We were very saddened to hear of the death, following a short illness, of Matthew Hale who taught Physics at RGS from 2010 until 2017. He was still in touch with RGS staff and attended the summer party. We have sent condolences to his family and the School will be represented at his funeral on September 17, 1330 at Douai Abbey, 1500 at West Berkshire Crematorium.

## **SCHOOL ESTATE**

We had a busy summer of works including the installation of further CCTV coverage, redecoration of Fraser Youens, landscaping and continued fire safety improvements. The floor of the Sports Hall has been replaced - this was a major expense but we are very pleased with the result. The extension to the gym, which has an estimated completion date of the end of September is now making good progress. We are very grateful to the FRORGS Committee who, through your donations, have been able to provide the principal funding for this project. Please [buy a brick](#) to support this.

I haven't bored you with the saga of Uplyme House, but if you are aware of its presence on Amersham Road and have driven past it in the last few days, you will see that it has now been fenced off. The Foundation has sold Uplyme House to developers as it was unaffordable for the School to renovate it to a standard at which it could be of use. Having been a boarding house and, subsequently, staff accommodation it had not been kept in a good state of repair to the extent that preserving it was not an option. The Foundation is a registered charity and will, in line with its charitable objectives, purchase another property to provide affordable accommodation to young staff at the start of their careers. Uplyme House refers only to the house and the plot - the field, pitches and car parks remain in our possession!

Many thanks for your support with the purchase of the right uniform, shoes etc. and ensuring that your son has returned to school prepared to uphold the standards we expect of RGS boys. Please do keep on top of unconventional haircuts and other variations to appearance, and support us when we challenge them. The point is to keep the boundaries narrow so that staff are not wasting time dealing with ambiguities.

We no longer allow eating inside the school buildings, save for the dining room. This is partly to help staff who had found that the increasing variety of food being eaten in form rooms resulted in lingering smells and persistently full bins. It is also to keep classrooms and corridors clean, particularly as we are about to embark on a comprehensive redecoration programme over the next three years. We have arrangements in place for inclement weather.

## **RUGBY**

We had an excellent pre-season fixture at the end of the summer holiday against Seaford College – our teams played good rugby, we won all matches and were treated to great food from Noodle Nation. There was a super atmosphere with an impressive turn out from parents together with the U15 team from 2010 whose reunion started by returning to RGS to watch the 1<sup>st</sup> XV. Our first main fixture took place on Saturday against Reading Blue Coat School - a new competitor for us. Results on the website.

## **BENEVOLENT FUND**

Many thanks to Mrs Crownshaw who has overseen the Benevolent Fund over the last two years. We believe strongly in 'giving back' and the Benevolent Fund is one way of achieving this. Mrs Khan has now take over the running of the fund. We would like to suggest a minimum donation of 50p per week, or £3.50 per half term in advance. Rather than having weekly charities, we are going to have a focus on six to enable us to raise a more meaningful amount. This term will be Jeans for Genes, followed by Oxfam. Please may I ask that you remind your son to bring cash with him on the new collection day, which is Tuesday. We never wish for families to be embarrassed in the case of hardship, so please do not hesitate to contact your son's tutor, in confidence, if it is not possible for your son to participate.

May I take this opportunity of wishing the whole RGS community a successful and rewarding year, thanking you warmly in advance for your support of the School. I shall look forward to meeting you or seeing you again either on the touchlines, at a concert, a parents' evening or one of the many events that take place throughout the year.

Best wishes

**Philip Wayne**