

HEADMASTER'S LETTER

14 December 2020

Dear Parent

This will be my last Headmaster's Letter of the term (unless, of course this unpredictable situation requires it!).

Before I launch into my end of term comments, may I draw your attention to the flow chart at the bottom of this letter. We have been fortunate in that we have had very few cases, though even our small number has required many students to work from home. (Heaven knows what the impact has been for those schools who have hit three score and ten, or more.) You will be aware that the isolation period has now reduced from fourteen days to ten. If your son has been asked to isolate until Monday 21 December he may now return to School on Friday 18 December. We would, however, understand if parents would rather adhere to the original guidance on this one occasion as we are so close to the end of term. Furthermore, may I urge parents to be vigilant this week to minimise the potential disruption to families during the Christmas period. 'If in doubt, keep him out!'

VALETE

We are sorry to be saying goodbye to Dr Graham Brown (Chemistry) who is retiring. Dr Brown joined us 4 years ago and has proved to be an excellent teacher bringing with him a wealth of experience from industry and teaching elsewhere. He has also done some great work on performance data and has, indeed, been an 'insistent voice' on Health and Safety matters during the pandemic. Graham has had great success in leading the Greenpower Car Club. On his arrival, he had intended to run the 'Caterham Club' - Caterhams were expensive and could not be driven by students. The battery-operated cars have been built and driven by our boys on racetracks, including Goodwood.

We are also saying goodbye to Alex Richardson (Biology) who joined us a newly qualified teacher last year. Alex and his partner have made the decision to relocate to Gloucestershire. We all wish him every happiness and success at the Sir Thomas Rich School, one of our rugby rivals.

James Wyncoll stepped in for a term to teach Maths whilst we awaited the arrival of a permanent teacher whom I shall introduce to you in January. James is a recent university graduate and has done superb work for the Department. James intends to travel once the pandemic is over but we are very pleased that he will be joining our pool of cover supervisors (in great demand at the moment!) until he can do so.

My very best wishes to all of our leavers.

CONGRATULATIONS to Mr (and Mrs) Clatworthy, our Director of Co-Curricular Activities, on the birth of Arthur.

BUSINESS AS USUAL

I have always endeavoured, as far as possible, to maintain a 'business as usual' approach to leading the School when times are tough. Scrutiny of my rhetoric will lead any reasonable person to question the extent to which we are operating as we ordinarily would, but the intent is clear - we 'crack on' ensuring that our boys get the best possible education at school or home.

None of this would have been possible without the sterling efforts of staff at School. Teachers who are juggling with 'blended learning', often being hindered by the IT problems we have faced; leaders and managers who are having to make quick decisions which keep up with evolving government advice; our committed team of support staff who are there to ensure that the non-teaching function is always there, like clockwork, to enable teachers to teach. Your sons have been superb throughout the term, co-operative, supportive and hard working. They will have benefitted from a high standard of teaching. I hope that boys will take the time to say 'thank you' in person or by email, where they feel it appropriate to do so.

As a parental community, you have been supportive. Staff have appreciated emails of thanks and you have rightly contacted the School when you have had concerns. Please do continue to offer feedback. It is always welcome.

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FRIDAY 18 DECEMBER

In the spirit of 'Business as usual' I have decided that we will operate as a normal 'last day of term', with the School open. We will begin our Christmas Holiday at 13:05. Please see below a flow-diagram which informs you what to do should your son test positive during the Christmas break.

OWs

For those not yet familiar with our lexicon, "Old Wycombienians" is the name given to former boys and staff. We have been very pleased to welcome a number of OWs back to RGS recently either in person or by Zoom. Over 50 signed up to offer 'Oxbridge' interview practice, with many more coming to give careers talks or advice. The common themes were the warmth of feeling they have towards RGS, (even if we have not been in touch for a very long time) as well as gratitude for the education it offered them. Please do encourage any OWs you know to sign up to the [OW website](#).

NEARLY NEW

I'd like to congratulate our Year 7 boys who have settled in exceedingly well, despite the challenges of the pandemic. We'll all be glad to get back to a sense of normality so that they can have the full RGS experience. Furthermore, we have new boys in other years, especially in Year 12 where there are thirty who seem to be making the most of RGS.

CAROL SERVICE

This has been recorded today (I'm writing this on Saturday, so I cannot yet comment on what you may expect). It promises to be an excellent 30-minute 'programme'. The readings were recorded in my study (looking festive, having borrowed the Reception Christmas tree). All Saint's Church is a large building (in the late 1800s there was a morning congregation of over a thousand worshippers) and was, therefore, suitable accommodation for our large choir who performed following the government guidelines for carol services (who'd have thought there would ever be such a thing?). I should like to thank the Vicar and Churchwardens for their assistance and patience in supporting our new Director of Music, his Assistant and, of course, our young performers and readers.

TOP OF THE FORM

Our House Quiz takes place on Thursday - this is the first House event we have held for a while and has been arranged by the Senior Prefects and House Captains.

SCHOOL SHOP

We have recently appointed a new catering contractor, Cucina, who will be commencing on a phased basis from January. The company will start in Boarding and the School Shop, taking over the main school dining room, which will reopen as The Restaurant (their house style) in September. We are handing over the School Shop as we are in the education, rather than the retail business. That said, Mrs Stroud has done an excellent job in managing the Shop, ably supported by Sixth Formers. As it will now be run by a school catering company, the Shop will need to better comply with nutritional guidance so the offer will be somewhat different over time.

Congratulations to....

Jonathan Turney - Duke of Edinburgh Award, Silver.

Senior Mathematical Challenge

On Thursday 3rd November, 156 Year 11, 12 and 13 sat the Senior Mathematical Challenge. The SMC is a 90-minute, multiple-choice competition aimed at students across Years 11-13 and promotes a love of problem-solving. It encourages mathematical reasoning, precision of thought, and fluency in using basic mathematical techniques to solve interesting problems. The problems on the Senior Mathematical Challenge are designed to make students think. Most are accessible, yet still challenge those with more experience. To recognise the highest performers in the Challenge, the top-scoring 60% of participants nationally are awarded Bronze, Silver and Gold certificates in the ratio 3:2:1. In addition, around 1000 of the very highest performers nationally are invited to take part in the [British Mathematical Olympiad Round 1](#) and around 6000 to take part in the [Senior Kangaroo](#). **Nakul Nataraj** was our top achieving student and was awarded the Best in School certificate with an outstanding perfect score of 125. All the more impressive as he is in Year 11! Harry Langford was awarded the Best in Year 13 and Aditya Mahesh was Best in Year 12. Congratulations to them all. In total 114 students were awarded certificates of which there were 12 Gold, 39 Silver and 63 Bronze. An impressive achievement. The seven students who qualified for the Senior Kangaroo, an online competition, were Kieran Cranley, Sam Denison, Shiv Mistry, Pasidu Perera, Fraser Clark, Shanker Narayan and James Edwicker. Whilst Harry Langford, Nakul Nataraj, Alex Curran and Aditya Mahesh were all invited to sit the prestigious [British Mathematical Olympiad Round 1](#), a 2½ hour written competition. We await their results.

Finally, I renew my thanks to you all for your support this term and wish you all a very Happy Christmas.

Philip Wayne

COVID-19 Procedures & Protocols for the Christmas Break

Friday 18	Saturday 19	Sunday 20	Monday 21	Tuesday 22	Wednesday 23	Thursday 24	Friday 25	Saturday 26	Sunday 27	Monday 28	Tuesday 29	Wednesday 30	Thursday 31	Friday 1 Jan	Saturday 2	Sunday 3	Monday 4
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In all cases of a positive test result over the holiday period, we ask that parents inform the School using attendance@rgshw.com

From Friday 18 to Wednesday 23 the School will, in line with DfE Guidance, operate a Test and Trace process. Parents should therefore commit to checking their school contact email address once a day, up to and including Wednesday 23 in case of notification of contact of their son with a positive case on Thursday 17 or Friday 18.

Please do practice caution in sending your sons to School in the last few days of term; if they are exhibiting any of the three symptoms listed to the left or any flu symptoms, we ask that you keep your son at home. Let attendance@rgshw.com know, and ask your son to access the online teaching resources. This is to minimise disruption to other families over the Christmas period.

We wish you all a very relaxing Christmas Break, and look forward to welcoming your sons back to School on **Monday 4 January**.

If your child has:

- a high temperature
- OR
- a new and persistent cough
- OR
- a loss of taste or sense of smell

- Book a test immediately using this [Online Form](#) or ring 119
- Child and household isolate until test result received

A positive test result:

- Inform the school immediately- attendance@rgshw.com
- Child isolates for 10 days from first date of symptoms
- Other household members isolate for 10 days

A negative test result:

Isolation can stop immediately. Child returns to school after Christmas, if better.