

## HEADMASTER'S LETTER 5 July 2021



Dear Parent

### VALETE

Today, I am saying goodbye and thank you to the following staff:

#### Teaching staff:

- **Lucy Wilson** (2018) (History) has a well-deserved promotion to Head of History in Newcastle-under-Lyme.
- **Antony Silvey** (2014) (Spanish) is relocating to Hertfordshire as a Key Stage Leader in Spanish, having had a very successful time here as a teacher of Spanish and Boarding Housemaster.
- **James Graham** (2020) is returning to his previous school as a teacher of Maths.

#### Fixed-term:

- **Dr Gillian Webb**, Biology has been very involved with MedSoc (herself a former GP).
- **David Green**, Chemistry, is relocating. We are grateful to David for helping us out on a temporary basis.
- **James Wyncoll**, a recent graduate, is not ruling out a career in teaching but is pursuing other avenues first.

#### Support Staff

- **Joanne Hewitt**, (2009) Deputy Headmaster's PA, is retiring at the end of the year. Joanne has not only provided excellent support to Mr Wallace but has also overseen the annual Prizegiving ceremonies and acted as Admissions Officer. With my thanks, we wish Joanne a very happy early retirement.

Many thanks to all colleagues and every good wish for the future.

### COVID

After a period of relative calm, we are, in line with other schools, facing the challenge of a rising number of cases, the NHS app delivering unwelcome news to unsuspecting staff and the associated disruption this causes to the rhythm of school life. I am ever so sorry to hear that some boys and staff are unwell and, of course, that families are needing to self-isolate.

We now have a number of staff who are not able to come into work for ten day periods and are having to deliver their lessons remotely. I cannot rule out having to make some decisions based on the School's capacity to operate a normal timetable in the next two weeks. We are needing to send to you emails outside of our normal Monday/Thursday pattern; please keep an eye on your inbox.

The Department for Education (DfE) continues to request that staff and school-aged young people conduct Lateral Flow Testing twice weekly at home until the end of term. The DfE has also, wistfully, suggested that we may have the renewed joy of on-site mass COVID-19 testing (staff and students) at the start of September, as we did earlier in the year. We are expecting an announcement about this, summer tracking, tracing and further precautions we will need to undertake. We will have our plans in place, ready to go. I think it is fair to say that COVID is not going away just yet and it is currently hard to predict what impact the pandemic will continue to have on, say, public examinations 2022 or attendance. I can only assume that we will need to be as agile next year as we have been this year. Whatever happens, please be assured we will continue to work our way through, as a team, in full support of your sons. Thank you for the support you give us in doing so.

## DON'T SHOOT THE MESSENGER

The vast majority of parents have been very supportive and understanding. Whilst I understand the frustrations associated with the current, ever changing situation may I request that school staff are treated with respect at all times either on the telephone or by email.

## RECENT/FUTURE EVENTS

**Sports Day** went ahead, competitors only. Year 12 were working from home on that day, but will hopefully be able to do their events during the last Games lesson of the year, should it take place. Many thanks to Sports and PE staff who made this happen in such unusual circumstances.

**The DofE Silver and Gold Expeditions** took place this weekend - some Covid related attrition, I'm afraid, but many thanks to those who staffed the event thus allowing it to go ahead.

**The RGS Cricket Festival** takes place in Newcastle this year. There are six 'Royal Grammar' schools: Colchester, Guildford, High Wycombe, Lancaster, Newcastle and Worcester - not formally connected - and the Festival has been an annual fixture for many years. It has been quite a feat for Newcastle to get this off the ground; likewise, our Head of Cricket, Mr Fletcher has had to cope with team changes for obvious reasons. I am sorry that some boys will miss out on the opportunity to play due to their need to self-isolate. We are very excited that it is our turn to hold the Festival next year. Planning has already begun!

**Jazz in the Quad** takes place on Saturday 10 July, assuming all is well. Tickets are limited to ensure sufficient self-contained family tables to be sufficiently spaced. Click [here](#).

**The Sportsman's Dinner** will be with us very quickly at the start of term. It takes place on 16 September in the Queen's Hall. Please do support the [online auction](#) which has some excellent items, with a range to suit a variety of budgets.

## JOLLY BOATING WEATHER

RGS rowers took part in the Marlow Town Regatta a week ago. Many congratulations to those who took part. There is a rowing report [here](#), which will give you more information and photographs from the event.

## CAREERS

Thanks to the staff of the Careers Department for producing a very full and interesting [paper](#).

## MIGRANT LEADERS

Gianni Austin, 11GK, who has recently won an award as a 'Leader of Tomorrow' for his role in the Align JV Work Experience Programme, has been working with the charity, Migrant Leaders.

*"Our school is one of excellence. Migrant Leaders is a charity dedicated to aiding those of us who intend to continue that excellence post RGS. Aimed at first- or second-generation migrants, as well as those from less privileged socioeconomic backgrounds, the Charity offers a great self-development programme which consists of the 'Young Leader Model' online course and mentorship in a profession of choice. Also available are amazing networking opportunities, both with professionals and other mentees in the programme.*

*The application process consists of an online application form and then a phone interview. Having been recently accepted to the programme, I must say the interview was a nerve wracking but invaluable experience, which taught me that interview success is very achievable. Saying that I am excited about my future is an understatement. Feeling as though your aspirations are becoming clear and obtainable is a great feeling and I'm looking forward to all the opportunities that will become available to me through this charity. So, if anyone (aged 16 and above) thinks they fit the criteria, visit the [Migrant Leaders](#) website and send in an application. It would be great to see more ambitious RGS students joining our community!"*

## SCHOOL DAY

There will be a short consultation document regarding some minor amendments to the end of the school day, commencing in September. Full details will be sent out tomorrow, with an opportunity to give feedback. In short, we are planning to reduce morning assembly time, bring the lunch breaks forward resulting in a slightly earlier finish to the school day. This will aid the co-curricular programme during the darker evenings of autumn and winter. There will be no reduction in teaching time.

## ACHIEVEMENT POINTS

I was very pleased to meet Finn McGrath, Ishbir Singh, Jack Vartiainen and Samuel Village who have been awarded an impressive 150+ Achievement Points

Yours sincerely

Philip Wayne