

HEADMASTER'S LETTER 31 January 2022



Dear Parent

I trust that you are all well. It seems as though, whilst still cold, we are starting to see hints of sunnier weather as we move towards the end of January.

I am very pleased to have more or less succeeded in my intent of a 'dry January', though I must admit to holding a few 'jokers' for particular occasions. The Burns Night, about which more later, was indeed one such event!

Welcome

A very warm welcome to Caroline Wallington who has joined our team of LSAs in the SEND Department and Lisa-Marie Gibson who has joined our HR Department as HR Administrator. We welcome both colleagues and wish them every happiness at RGS.

As well for others, as for ourselves...

Our Benevolent Fund, overseen by Mrs Khan, has been successful with boys giving very generously to a humanitarian charity '[Choose Love](#)' and raising £600. This term the fund is being directed to Cancer Research UK – I hope that families will be willing to support the important work undertaken by this charity. Sixth Formers with bank accounts can now pay using QR codes with their phones.

Mrs Francis' Year 9 form group (9GF) have also been fundraising, a sweet stall for students and a 'coffee and cake' bar for staff. This is a most impressive initiative - their own work and motivation.

Oscar Panyani informed me *'We raised £408.44 from the sweets initiative and the staff treats. The boys were amazing (and parents who had helped to bake). I'm pleased to report I received some very positive emails throughout the day from happy members of staff.'*

Year 13 mock trial experience

On Tuesday 25th January, five Year 13 students visited 1GC Barristers Chambers in London to participate in a mock trial. Billy Kucera and Keshav Krish Anand acted as the instructing solicitors for each party, having won a competition arranged by Rayden Solicitors in Beaconsfield. Haroon Shah, Mateusz Lenczewski and Kai Bangar also attended and worked with the Judge to decide the outcome of the hearing. The experience was a valuable insight into life as a Lawyer. Many thanks to Rayden Solicitors and 1 Garden Court Chambers for this highly useful opportunity. Many congratulations to the students for their efforts and participation.

Toxic masculinity

On Monday 24th January, Hira Ali CEO of [Advancing your Potential](#) delivered a talk on Positive Masculinity for the Year 13 Lecture Series. The talk is the first part of a series of talks planned on this topic. Hira talked about raising one's own self-awareness, not only questioning one's own bias but also being an ally and advocate against discrimination in today's society. The talks on Positive Masculinity aim to develop the boys' awareness of the part they can play in making the world of the future a more accepting, tolerant and equal one. It was no surprise, but nice nonetheless, to receive such wonderful feedback on how our boys conducted themselves during the session - the presenter was clearly somewhat daunted before she arrived at the prospect of speaking to over 200 17/18-year olds. Our assemblies' theme this week, to all years, is also Toxic Masculinity delivered by one of our Senior Prefects.

Rugby

We have had some fantastic games since Christmas; the 1st XV have had the highs and lows associated with this level of schoolboy rugby - a narrow loss against Warwick was balanced by great victory over St Benedicts, Ealing. The remainder of the St Benedict's block took place at the weekend. I am later today (Sunday) travelling to watch the team in a tournament (I'm a Dad as well as the Head for this team) at Seaford College – keep an eye on Twitter for updates. It will be a super day.

We were so very proud of the U15s who got through the regional final of the Nat West Trophy, knocking out Harrow along the way and facing Wellington College. It was a very tense but impressive game ending in a 24-24 draw. Unfortunately, we went out of the competition on tries score. Many congratulations to this excellent team of boys and to their coaches. It was, as one spectator put it, *'an extraordinary example of sport at its best and at its hardest, with no-one deserving to lose.'* We had excellent support from scores of parents and hundreds of boys. The spirit of the game was commented on by the Wellington parents - thanks to those who have shared the following with me:

- *'Please pass on my compliments to RGS - they played a great game and are a fantastic team'*
- *'Great atmosphere, like a gladiatorial arena'*
- *'The drums and mob were to be expected – would have been the same at Welly - but the silence on the kicks for both teams was exceptional'*

Presentation skills

We are so pleased to be able to resurrect our 'Presentation Skills' course – we have, for a number of years now, secured the services of Chiltern Toastmasters and, this year, Eddie the coach will put around 60 boys through their paces. We heard 20 on Wednesday on all matter of topics. Every speech, whether amusing, moving, factual or a combination of the three, was delivered by heart, with passion and from memory. Many thanks to Mr Noyes and Mesdames Tan and Wallace for running this event. There will be more during the term; keep your eyes on the calendar.

Raleigh the troops

Mr Tilbrook, from our Biology Department has started a 'Bike Club'. This is to teach our young cyclists about bike maintenance. Here is his blog from his first day. I shall certainly be bringing my trusty Felt in for a bit of TLC. *'Brought in a couple of my bikes today as conversation starters. Setting up a club to play with, and discuss, all things push bike in an effort to engage some scientific thinking around the design and engineering associated with these most elegant of transport modes. And to learn some practical tips on servicing and general maintenance on the way.'*

Burns Night

Many thanks to the Friends of Rugby for a superb evening. It was very well supported and the generosity of parents who attended is, as ever, much appreciated and pivotal to the maintenance of our sporting programme.

I am always so pleased to receive positive feedback about your sons - the comments from the opposition parents above ring very true and go way beyond the realms of rugby. RGS is a very special community. We have tried to keep 'business as usual' as our guiding principle which has fortified us in difficult times. Having spent eighteen months making sure that the education provision was safe and effective and working hard to settle the school finances after the impacts of the first lockdown, I can safely say that I am very excited about the future.

We are working together on our five-year strategy at present 'RGS2026' with a refreshed statement of intent and values and some exciting plans, including significant capital investment. All aboard.

With best wishes

Philip Wayne