

## HEADMASTER'S LETTER

9 November 2020

Dear Parent

I would not have suspected, when driving to work at the end of last week, that much had changed. My complacency in leaving 10 minutes later than usual meant a somewhat stressful journey as I hit two 'school run' bottle necks along the way. The weekend has, however, been different. A suspension of duties as parental taxi driver, school rugby and club football spectator gave me time to enjoy a couple of long dog walks, a cycle ride and the occasional foray into the role of amateur driving instructor. Like many of you, I am not relishing the lack of contact with friends and family though it is good to see so many people enjoying the fresh air. I am also aware of the fact that many of you will be missing the RGS sports, concerts and other events which enable you to support your son and also to meet up with the parents of your son's friends.

Ernest Shackleton, the explorer, remarked that there is a *'Need to put a footstep of courage into stirrup of patience'*. The announcement of a 'lockdown' is one thing; the guidance which accompanies it is quite another. I have endeavoured to be both patient and optimistic in my intention to operate 'business as usual'. This involves the interpretation of guidance in a responsible way which also enables us to be as close to the RGS we like to be. This would not be possible without the exceptional co-operation of your sons, the commitment of staff and your support. As we take our time to digest the guidance, to support staff and students who need to self-isolate or have vulnerabilities, I thank you for your patience and know that you trust us to make decisions in the best interests of your sons, my staff and the organisation as a whole.

### POSITIVE CASE

I wrote to all Year 12 parents late last night (Sunday) having been informed of a confirmed case of Covid-19. Year 12 were asked to work from home today whilst the Attendance Team were able to seek advice from the DfE and the Thames Valley Health Protection Trust. At the time of writing, we have not yet heard back from these agencies so cannot provide further information at this time. There will be an email to Year 12 during the early evening. Please see the attached governmental letter, designed as a template for Heads to use, with advice for school communities. For ease, it is reproduced 'verbatim, in government speak and refers to your strapping young lads as children!

### VIRTUALLY HERE

We recognise that our community is not as connected as it was before the pandemic; parents are not able to stand on touchlines, we are unable to host normal parents' evenings and music events are on hold. But the School is here for you all; we continue to lead through the crisis.

Having trialled a new online 'Parents' Evening' system, we will be holding the Year 13 Virtual Parents' Afternoon on Monday, 30 November from 16:15-18:45. This will be a good opportunity to discuss your son's recent progress as well as the A level mock exams in January. We are also holding Year 7 and 12 Virtual Form Tutor afternoons on Tuesday 17 (Year 7) and Wednesday 18 (Year 12) November and there will be Report Cards for all year groups in the coming weeks. Further details will be released soon. Parents' Evenings are but a part of our home/school partnership - please do not hesitate to contact your son's teacher if you have any concerns.

We are planning a webinar for boys and parents joining us in September 2021. Please do spread the word.

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## REMEMBRANCE SERVICE

Our Remembrance Service on Wednesday 11 November normally involves the whole school assembling in the Quad, joined by a congregation of parents, OWs and friends of the School. Sadly, this is not possible this year. Instead our Service will have a small representative group of students, along with the CCF who will be able to socially distance around the Quad. The service will follow the same order as usual, without the hymn, and will be filmed for future viewing on YouTube.

## SPORTS EVENTS/NOTICES

FRORGS have migrated their 'Comedy Quiz Night' on line on 28 November. Please do support it - it will raise funds as well as giving us all a great opportunity to engage with our son's school again. [Click here for further details.](#)

FRORGS are optimistic that we can 'pipe in the haggis' at Beaconsfield Golf Club during their Burns Night on 23 January 2021. We have set a date of 8 May 2021 for our Bat Oar Ball (for the benefit of parents new to the School, an event not to be missed).

Our Director of Sport, Mr Pettifer, has worked with the Sports and PE Department, who are keen to maintain our co-curricular provision, and has provided me with the following statement:

*"The Sports Department at RGS are continuing, as much as is possible, to maintain our co-curricular offer of sport during the second national lockdown. Under our Risk Assessment we are able to provide all current activity provision; we see education as going beyond the classroom and the co-curricular offer is a very important aspect of the whole education. All sport also follows the Coronavirus Guidance for Safe Sport in School (and National Governing Body guidelines).*

*All activities happening as part of our 'sporting school day' will continue to run. In order to reduce extra travel, and comply with new Government Guidance, we are not able to run any weekend sport. Please be assured that we will resume these activities as soon as we are able."*

I fully support the above. Along with sports staff I am, of course, disappointed about the lack of Saturday fixtures but as we do not operate 'Saturday morning school' it would be a stretch to invent it for sport at this time.

## MUSIC NEWS

The Music Department has auditioned over 75 young people for the proposed show 'In the Heights' due to take place in the Spring.

## CAROL SERVICE

We are planning our Carol Service which will almost certainly be a condensed version (in duration but not in quality) for online viewing.

## KEEPING OUR COMMUNITY SAFE

Although we have stopped short of mandating it, we are strongly recommending that teachers ask boys to wear masks in lessons.

In conclusion, Ernest Shackleton also said '*Optimism is true moral courage*'. We are, indeed, optimistic and look forward to some sense of normality. In the meantime, please do stay safe and, as ever, do not hesitate to get in touch if you need any help or support.

Just a reminder to follow us on Twitter @RGSHW, from which you can get access to the departmental accounts, read the comms and look at the constantly developing website to stay connected with RGS.

I wish you well in these difficult times.

**Philip Wayne**