

HEADMASTER'S LETTER 29 November 2021



Dear Parent

You will have seen that many parts of the country have seen snow over the weekend. I have very seldom closed my schools due to snow, but recent events have taught us all that we can, in extremis, deliver a good education remotely. Any announcement from now on will refer to 'remote learning' or 'work from home' rather than describe it as a closure. Please note that any announcement regarding online migration due to bad weather will be via the School Website. Buckinghamshire Council likes schools to upload information onto their website (the page is still called 'School Closures') [here](#) is the link. Please note that I **will not** make these announcements or discuss arrangements on Twitter.

VALETE

We say goodbye and thank you to Helen Johnson who joined us on a temporary contract as Senior IT Technician.

WELCOME

Bushra Begum has joined us as a Learning Support Assistant.

APPLE FOR THE TEACHER

It is very easy for me to write about sport and music because there are events to attend about which I can wax lyrical. I take the opportunity, however, to walk around the School almost every day to see what is happening. I have seen some fantastic work going on in classrooms day in, day out in all year groups. As much as I exhort 'Business as Usual' this is achievable because School staff pull together as a team, to operate in challenging circumstances. The media does not always treat teachers with the respect they deserve; I take my hat off to those teaching a full timetable in classrooms with windows open, several students absent alongside the daily imperatives which fall in the long Michaelmas term.

EXAMS 2022

Our Director of Studies, James Eve, has sent a letter regarding the contingency plans for public examinations. [Here](#) is the link.

CAREERS

This is a good opportunity for me to thank our Careers Department for their sterling work as well as the OWs and parents who give freely of their time to talk to boys about careers paths. Our students should be aspiring to distinctive, fulfilling careers aligned with their interests and aptitudes. This month's Careers Bulletin can be accessed [here](#).

COMEDY NIGHT

Many thanks to those who came to support the Comedy Night. It was a great evening, organised by FRORGS, with an excellent curry from the Old Bengal, Beaconsfield. I am very sorry, for the second year, that our Queen's Hall heating was not working and the contingency blower was not activated. This did, however, provide additional material for the comedians. We do have some significant work to carry out in the 1960s block, which we hope to address in the not too distant future. I'll catch them out next time; they will be so hot that they will need to weave in jokes about the The Bahamas, rather than the Arctic.

NOVEMBER SHOWCASE and OTHER EVENTS

Before I launch into my review of the Showcase, this is a good time to thank you all for your attendance at School events this term. From the sports fundraisers, information evenings right through to this concert, we have enjoyed very good support from parents and friends of the School. It is a real fillip (no pun intended) to organisers and participants to have a full house. And, not to put too fine a point on it, the financial support makes all the difference to what we can provide for your sons.

The Showcase was quite exceptional. The Music Department were overwhelmed by the emails received from parents, all of whom were very proud to see their sons taking part in music of so high a standard. I have often noted the politeness of applause following a junior string ensemble performance (almost as though the audience are wearing gloves), but this was not the case last week with rich, in-tune sounds coming from young violinists, classical and choral. There was something for everyone. The Junior Choir of over 100 singers performed with great enthusiasm and we'll hear the whole choir in a few weeks' time at the Festival of Lessons and Carols. The Music Triumvirate of Messrs Mullaly, Chitham-Mosely and Mrs Tomkins (who has the understated title of Music Administrator!) have really put their mark on the department.

One issue facing music in general is that fewer and fewer young people are learning musical instruments. Whilst our numbers at RGS are high compared with many other schools, we are not getting as many boys from state primary schools arriving already playing an instrument as we might have done twenty years ago. Do encourage your sons, and most certainly if you have children of primary age to consider learning an instrument. It is both a great sociable hobby and whilst very few make it to the top, it can be a useful complementary career and income as it most certainly was for me for many years.

GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE

Please see below the message from the Department of Education. We have followed government guidance throughout the Pandemic. To this effect, unless exempt, all boys must wear masks in corridors, communal areas and on school coaches. The guidance does not, at this stage, mandate the wearing of masks in classrooms though boys may do so if they wish. Please may I remind you that boys should be testing twice-weekly (Wednesdays and Sundays).

'On Saturday 27 November, the Prime Minister [announced](#) new temporary measures following the emergence of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 in the UK.

The new measures will be introduced as a precaution to slow down the spread of the variant while we gather more information. We will continue to keep this under review as the situation develops.

Face coverings

Face coverings should be worn in communal areas in all settings by staff, visitors and pupils or students in year 7 and above, unless they are exempt.

Pupils or students (in year 7 or above) should continue to wear face coverings on public and dedicated school transport, unless they are exempt.

Testing

All educational and childcare settings should continue to encourage staff and students to test twice weekly using lateral flow device (LFD) tests.'

With best wishes

Philip Wayne