

HEADMASTER'S LETTER

14 February 2022



Dear Parent

It is hard to believe that half term is nearly with us already in an Easter term which has flown by.

MOCKS

Invigilators were full of praise for the way in which our Year 11 and 13 students conducted themselves in the mock examinations. Outcomes are now known by students - mocks are exactly that and should provide very useful information to help students prepare for the public examinations which are to take place in the summer.

Staff have been talking through the specification changes with students in lessons. A number of staff have told me how impressed they've been with the pro-activity of many boys who have arrived at a lesson, having already researched the matter themselves.

EASTER REVISION

After a two-year break, we are pleased to be able to, once again, run our Easter Revision Courses. This is tuition and revision, in small groups, led by experienced tutors in a range of subjects. Click on the [link](#) for further details.

DESTINATIONS

It is great to see university offers coming through. As ever, our students will be spreading their wings to all parts of the country. As we have a large number heading for STEM subjects, the London universities are popular destinations, in addition to, 17 students who have received offers for Oxford or Cambridge, withersoever they goeth, I wish all Year 13 every success in the run-up to their A levels, as they strive to achieve their preferred destination.

CHANGE OF DATE FOR EASTER BREAK

We are in the process of migrating to a new Management Information System, replacing SIMS with Ed:Gen (essentially ISAMS, with state sector adaptations). As it is a cloud-based system (probably not a revolution for many of you, but a huge step forward here) which will facilitate a number of functions under one cover, as well as saving the School money on a number of bolt-on software programmes. We have been allocated a number of training sessions, most of which we can fit into our usual schedules but in order to train the maximum number of staff, **the student term will finish on Thursday 7 April at 3.30pm (not the usual end of term 'half day') with staff only attending on Friday 8th April.**

FIRST AID

Year 8 have recently received some First Aid training from Mrs Gallagher, our Boarding Housemistress, teacher of Maths and fully qualified trainer. She has covered basic life support including primary survey, recovery position, treating someone having an asthma attack, treating someone having a severe allergic reaction, CPR and using an AED. Training for some other year groups is currently in the planning stage.

CCF

CCF Cadets (Year 11) spent a recent Sunday in quite changeable weather going through a series of leadership development tasks that aimed to build teamwork and self-confidence skills which they can then take forward as NCOs within the CCF and into the wider world of work. There was a complex speed distance time table-top exercise, followed by several command tasks and current affairs discussion sessions all of which are designed to stretch the cadets and make them think about their own strengths and weaknesses as both a cadet and a student at the RGS. Throughout the day they were assessed against each other and all approached the day with a positive can-do attitude. The cadet with the highest score was Cadet Matthew Yarwood and is seen receiving the Youens' Leadership trophy from Contingent Commander Sqn Ldr Matthews.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE MIND

Mr O'Reilly impresses us every year, in assembly, with his reading of 'Poetry by Heart' - usually a lengthy complex poem that many would struggle to get through with the text in front of them. Inspired by the 2021 performance, Year 7 boys have raised £2,423.13 for the mental health charity MIND (Bucks) by learning poems by heart. Many congratulations on raising money for so worthy a cause. If you would like to be kept informed about Buckinghamshire Mind and their mental health services, please subscribe to their [newsletter](#).

ASSEMBLIES

Following the positive masculinity session for the Sixth Form I mentioned in my previous letter, this was the theme for last week's assemblies. Citing the good example set by some sportsmen and actors, Steffan Wayne delivered a talk on this wide-ranging topic.

OLIVER!

Many congratulations to Wycombe High School for putting on an excellent production of Oliver! I was very pleased to attend the final performance (with the usual speeches) and was very impressed. Congratulations to Alex Gold who played (with stomach padding) the part of Mr Bumble, the Beadle - carrying off the comedy and the songs with great aplomb. Jaeyen Liam frightened the living daylights out of the unsuspecting Londoners with a most compelling interpretation of Bill Sykes. Well done!

HOUSE MATHS COMPETITION: A report from Will McLaughlin (Year 13)

'With a packed Room 34, brilliant displays of mathematical problem solving, and chocolate prizes being handed out at an electric pace, the first ever Maths House Competition was a fantastic success. Twenty-five students from Years 7-9 represented their houses in a variety of mathematical challenges which contributed to their overall score, including the iPad-based Gimkit, a cross-number, and a selection of logic problems. Sandringham and St. James were the top performers taking joint 1st place, gaining important points for their house, and even more important boxes of Heroes to take home! Not only were there prizes for the final winning teams though, as individual effort was also rewarded throughout the contest in the form of bags of mini-eggs. Everybody who competed should be very proud of their effort, and because the most important factor in a team's success was the number of students who participated, all pupils should be encouraged to join the next event and represent their house!'

1st: St. James and Sandringham 3rd: Balmoral 4th: Buckingham 5th: Windsor and Kensington

STUDENT VOICE

There have been a number of student 'Round Tables' recently - we always find that boys contribute so well to any sort of 'student voice'. Recent examples are below:

- A really positive meeting with the Director of Bucks Music Trust as part of a county-wide youth consultation to encourage discussion on jobs in the creative industry and the importance of the Arts.
- As Part of a broader safeguarding health check a group of boys met with senior staff and an external partner to talk about how safe they felt in School.
- I have now been able to start my 'Birthday Boys' again - I am playing catch-up and currently on December! This is one way of ensuring that I have met every boy in the school at least once, around the time of their twelfth birthday.
- I will shortly be running a series of student sessions on our values, vision and what RGS will look like in 2026 #RGS2026.
- Next week a group of boys will be joining a seminar at Beaconsfield High School on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - I'll include a report in my next letter.

SPORT

Sport has, as ever, played an important part in the last week or so. There were a few emotional Year 13 rugby players who finished their last 15-a-side season with a great win against Champion School, East London. Other age groups had great success too. Hockey and rowing continue to be very popular sports with our boys putting in a lot of effort and reaping the rewards as a result. Our Fencing Team, unsurprisingly, faces tough competition against the large independent schools but is most definitely 'lunging above its weight!'. The cricket season will be underway in a matter of weeks and a variety of training sessions are taking place.

PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

Many thanks to the Parents' Association for organising the Year 7/8 disco on Saturday evening. The Twitter coverage showed that this was a super, much enjoyed event. I have written before about the success of last year's CrowdFund. The canopies are in daily use and have brought back to life the outdoor eating area (which was itself funded by the PA in Spring 2021). The computers in L8 are having an impact on a number of departments.

L8 is used for regular IT teaching, DT Teaching, Art (graphics), A level language exams, university admission tests in many subjects and online testing across year groups.

Mr Marshall Head of DT wrote:

'In terms of DT, we use L8 specifically for two computer aided design (CAD) programs called '2-D Design Tools' and 'SolidWorks'. The latter is industry standard and used by top companies such as Rolls Royce, Dyson, BMW, Suzuki etc. The Year 7s use both programs, but mainly 2-D Design Tools and we introduce SolidWorks into our curriculum in a big way, across Year 9. It's a key component part of GCSE and A Level NEA work to produce CAD drawings as part of the design process (mirroring what happens in many engineering industries). CAD can also be linked to CAM (computer aided manufacturing) so often images drawn on both programs can be laser cut back here in DT, or 3-D printed. This upgrade of L8 has really revolutionised what we do in DT. Since the country as a whole has a shortage of engineers (despite it being a well-respected, well-paid field), the RGS can at least take pride in the fact that by supporting high-quality DT, we are doing our part in providing the practical, problem solving element that compliments the other STEM subjects ((Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths).'

I wish you all a very relaxing half-term break.

Philip Wayne