

The Bulletin

Friday 4 September 2020

Issue 169



From the Headmaster

I hope you and your family had as relaxing a summer holiday as possible and that your son is refreshed and ready for the start of the school year. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all the new boys and their parents. The beginning of the academic year and a fresh intake mark an exciting stage and I have every confidence that the new boys will make a real impact upon the School. I look forward to getting to know them individually and to observing them as they develop and flourish.

I often speak of how the last twelve months at the RGS have been extraordinary: I am justifiably proud of our talented community and every year seems to surpass the last with the outstanding achievements and successes of our students. The last few months have, however, more than lived up to their billing of extraordinary! This has made the return of the students to the RGS all the more special. I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of my staff who have worked tirelessly over the summer preparing for this week. The health, safety and wellbeing of our whole community are always of paramount importance and never more so than in the current climate. We have sought professional advice and every detail has been assessed and checked by our insurers to ensure full compliance and adherence to best practice. There are challenges ahead of us and everyone's co-operation will be key but please rest assured that we will continue to prioritise the safety of every single individual. Although many of the routines and procedures will feel strange for us all, the year group bubbles do at least provide an opportunity for slightly more normal, natural interaction and this will allow for year-group assemblies, sport and other activities to take place.

We are incredibly proud of the success of our boys and, indeed, striving for excellence and harbouring healthy ambition are admirable traits which epitomise our community; however, these are achieved in a caring and compassionate way. For us as a school, inclusivity, integrity, respect, tenacity and service are equally as important as scholarship and achievement. The RGS is a welcoming environment where a mutually supportive ethos is at the very heart of our philosophy. Each individual at the RGS has so much untapped potential; to unlock this, the boys must be confident and happy. If you have any concerns with regard to your son, however seemingly trivial, please do not hesitate to contact the School via his Tutor. We appreciate that boys will have understandable concerns after such a prolonged absence from school and, in this light, it is all the more important that problems are raised and swiftly addressed: the repercussions of lockdown on young people's mental health have been well documented. For this reason, I have made changes to my pastoral team to provide even greater levels of support. Each boy has a number of members of staff he can turn to if he wants advice or guidance. His Tutor is likely to be his first point of contact; however, every individual also has their Head of Year, Head of Section, Housemaster, Personal Tutor (Fourth Form and above), the Deputy Head (Pupils), the School Nurse, and the School Counsellor. In addition, the senior boys, with the benefit of professional training, take an active role in the mentoring of junior boys to provide peer support; this has proved to be a highly successful initiative and one we shall restart as soon as is practicable. By talking openly and airing concerns, we can help to resolve any issues as they arise.

For the benefit of those parents new to the School, the RGS newsletter *The Bulletin* is published electronically every two weeks. We are very proud of the efforts and achievements of our boys and this fortnightly publication provides an opportunity to celebrate the many diverse successes enjoyed by our community. I am always keen to hear news of RGS boys so that their energy, industry and achievements can be recognised; please do not hesitate to keep me informed. As well as *The Bulletin*, the RGS website and social media platforms – Facebook, Instagram and Twitter – also provide useful means of staying updated with news from the School and gaining an insight into daily life. In addition, each day, *The RGS Today* is emailed to all students and this, again, provides the boys with an invaluable way of keeping aware of the many diverse opportunities open to them.

So, as we embark on a new term, I wish your son a very happy and fulfilling year and look forward to meeting you – I hope in person – during the course of this academic year. In the meantime, I hope, in the most positive way, for as ordinary a year as possible!

Latest News

[View the full news archive](#)

Academic: At a time of great uncertainty and anxiety for students and families (and schools!) across the country, we were delighted that our students emerged with an outstanding set of public examination grades. As Dr Cox commented: “The professionalism and integrity of my teaching staff – as well as the stringent assessment processes which are interweaved throughout the academic year – allowed us to make robust, realistic predictions. These grades are consistent with historic trends at the RGS and, as such, have both integrity and value. The results have allowed our outgoing Upper Sixth Form to secure places on some of the most competitive courses at the leading universities in the country and our outgoing Fifth Form to continue with their chosen A Level options and to harbour the most ambitious of aspirations.”

Staff Leavers: We bid a sad farewell to a number of individuals – support and teaching staff – at the end of last term; in particular, Mrs Perrett and Mrs Walsh had accrued 44 years of service to the RGS. We are indebted to all those staff who made such a profound impact on the RGS: Mr Armstrong (Chemistry); Miss Bains (Religion and Philosophy); Mr Cornwell (Economics); Mrs Perrett (Mathematics); Mr Quenault (English); Mr Shakeri (History and Politics); Dr Thackrey (Music); Mr Durrands (Expeditions and Activities); and Mrs Walsh (Mallison Library). Thank you all for your remarkable service to the School.

New Staff: The RGS is delighted to welcome the following new members of staff: Mr Chapman (Economics); Mr Crew (Mathematics); Mr Davies (Head of History from January 2021); Miss Eaton (Music); Mr Grace (Chemistry); Mr Hanak-Hammerl (Mathematics); Mrs Hussan (Learning Support); Mrs Lawrence (Classics); Mr Rumble (Economics); Miss Wild (Music); and Mr Winterburn (Religion and Philosophy). In addition, our Language Assistants are Mr Bock (German), Mr Dorville (French) and Miss Perez (Spanish); Mr Perceval is our Physical Education gap year student. We wish them all the very best.

Health & Safety

In *The RGS Today* which is circulated via email to students each week day in the late afternoon, we include regular reminders to the students about the importance of protecting themselves and prioritising their health, especially while travelling to and from school and when moving around our site. Your support in reiterating these key messages would be very much appreciated. Our Covid-19 Golden Rules include a focus on (but not exclusively):

- good health;
- hand and respiratory hygiene;
- cleanliness of desks and areas used;
- sensible social distancing;
- good ventilation and being outside whenever possible;
- structured movement around the School;
- year-group bubbles and designated areas.