



From the Headmaster

The world our students inhabit is a complex and challenging one; young lives these days are acted out in a far more public way and it is often hard to escape judgement by others. These pressures have clearly been exacerbated by the events of recent months which has meant that a number of these issues have been felt all the more acutely, even more keenly. The statistics confirm this, that the incidence of stress among young people, of not meeting the expectations of themselves and others, of feeling inadequate as a result, has increased significantly over the past decade or so, and it is due, in no small part, to the rise of perfectionism or, to be more accurate, the rise in the myth of perfectionism: academically, socially, physically, and so on.

As a community we obviously want all our boys to do the very best they can; with bright, committed boys who take pride in all they do, this is a given. Our message equally, however, is that they should not reflect too harshly on themselves if they do not always reach their own exacting high standards: if they are not always the best player on the pitch; or if they do not get the best mark in a test; or if they do not consistently perform at the level they would like to in art, drama, music and so on. It is clearly not a healthy obsession ceaselessly and doggedly to strive for perfection, especially if this results in increased stress or negative self-esteem. High aspiration tempered by a realistic attitude and common sense is a more sensible and sustainable approach. This is a message I repeat regularly: quite often, good or very good is good enough, especially when there are so many external pressures which provide further challenges and obstacles on a daily basis for us all.

The strength of the RGS community is that every individual is unique, and it is this uniqueness which gives each of us our innate worth and value. Innate qualities are by their very nature inherent, and do not have to be repeatedly earned; they persist regardless of fluctuations in achievement. I often say to the boys that every single one of us is a work in progress, never the finished article – since that would mean that no further improvement is possible, and there is always room for improvement. And since all of us are works in progress, we are, therefore, not perfect. Our imperfections add value and make their own unique contribution to the whole character. A vibrant, dynamic community is one where every single one of us is self-aware and is committed to learning, developing and improving.

So as we continue to function as normally as we can despite the not insignificant challenges, I would urge the boys to take with them this message. Don't always strain and labour desperately to be perfect – it will never happen. Try your best, work hard and play hard, but celebrate your imperfections, accept yourself as a work in progress, and be proud of who you are.

As poet and singer-songwriter Leonard Cohen celebrated with this inspired lyric in a song called *Anthem*:
“Forget your perfect offering. There is a crack, a crack in everything. That’s how the light gets in...”

Latest News

Activities Day: This year's First Form Activity Day, in place of the annual Isle of Wight adventure weekend, took place slightly closer to home at a sun-drenched Bradstone Brook. The boys undertook a carousel of activities: axe throwing (three different types of blade and a fair few risk assessments!), climbing, cricket, rugby, team building and tennis. Not only did the day have a genuinely relaxed, friendly atmosphere but it also allowed boys to get to meet new friends and to nurture so many of those key skills such as teamwork and collaboration, resilience and tenacity.

Senior Prefects: The Headmaster was delighted – finally – to be able to award the new Upper Sixth Form Senior Prefect team with their official ties. In the absence of physical school assemblies, Dr Cox made the socially-distanced presentations in the Chained Library as he handed over the ties, minus the customary handshake! The Senior Prefect appointments for 2012/21 are as follows: School Captain is **Theo Lakin** and he is supported by the two Deputy School Captains, **Christian Moody** and **Jamie Stratford**. The other House Captain appointments are as follows: Austin House is **Omeet Atara**; Beckingham House is **George Sherwin**; Hamonde House is **Ben Watkins**; Nettles House is **Jack Gamble**; Powell House is **Salvatore Nigrelli**; and Valpy House is **Hugh Jones**. In addition, the Headmaster has appointed **Aman Ashfaque**, **Ellis Baker**, **Joe Field**, **Joseph McMurray**, **Chris Ratcliffe**, **James Robinson**, and **Luke Wyllie** to the Senior Prefect team. We wish the boys all the very best of luck in their roles.

Sports News

Cricket: As the inaugural Michaelmas Term cricket season continued so did the good weather as we welcomed both Reed's School and Tiffin School for matches across all age groups. The RGS teams were victorious in all but three matches: an astonishing success from two full block fixtures. From many individual highlights with the ball, for the Under 13s **Tommy McMurray** finished with figures of 2 – 4, **Aidan Golding** 1 – 13 for the Under 14s, and **Dylan Sahota** showed the depth of leg spin in the Under 16s by claiming 4 – 18. With the bat, there were a succession of disciplined performances: at Under 14 level, **Tom Donnelly** (43) and **Aarush Gupta** (61*) again showed what a formidable opening pair they are. **Rohan Gupta** starred with the bat, scoring 55* and 67 at Under 16 level. In the senior teams scores of 63 and 88 by **Chris Ratcliffe**, 58* by **Aman Ashfaque**, 45 by **Seb Burrage** and 46* by **Zain Hafiz** were all particularly noteworthy.

Swimming: **Andrew Brett** (4V) has been selected for the *Swim England* Development Programme 2020. This is a fine achievement given his first year at British and English Nationals has been disrupted due to Covid. Andrew will attend his first development camps in October.

Health & Safety

The health, welfare and safety of our community continue to remain our highest priority. In *The RGS Today* which is circulated via email to students each week day, 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;
- good ventilation and being outside whenever possible;
- structured movement around the School;
- sensible social distancing as well as adherence to year-group bubbles and designated areas while in school;
- strict adherence to government guidelines with regard to social distancing, the *Rule of Six* whenever they are outside the school gates, the obligatory wearing of masks on public transport etc.