



From the Headmaster

As our Fifth and Upper Sixth Form students come towards the end of an intense three-week assessment phase, I would like to congratulate them all on their dedication, perseverance and resilience during this period. The fact that they have epitomised these qualities is to their great credit and in stark contrast to the media perception of today's teenagers. The pejorative phrase *generation snowflake* came into widespread usage in 2016, derogatory shorthand to refer to millennials, a generation said to be easily offended, attention-seeking and lacking resilience. Teenagers were branded as snowflakes owing to their unique nature and yet equally their delicate and fragile character, a metaphor suited to the overly-sensitive and sheltered nature this group continues to be accused by the Press of embodying.

To me, however, our boys are anything but snowflakes. Faced by some of the most important public examinations of their young lives, they have had to work with greater independence, flexibility and motivation than many of their predecessors. Faced with uncertainty, they have had to focus on those areas which they have been able to control and their dedicated approach to revision and consolidation has been testament to this. Indeed, they will have to be equally thick-skinned in the coming months as the media inevitably looks to undermine and question the integrity of these assessments, to target the independent sector for privileged advantage, and to talk about devalued grades. My message to you all would be to ignore this noise and have genuine pride in what your sons have achieved. I have every confidence that our boys will emerge from this process with a set of grades which will allow them to have the most ambitious of future aspirations. Equally, however, as I regularly say, they must be aware that the examination grades will get them the interview, it won't get them the job.

The last 18 months have taught our students so much. The world into which they will emerge is markedly different and will continue to evolve at a rapid pace. 2020 turned the workplace on its head and this, in turn, made employers re-evaluate what they are looking for from future employees. It is likely that many people applying for a job will have the necessary skills and the qualifications; as I mentioned, grades from the RGS will get our students the interview. In the current climate, however, it is the soft skills which will get you the job and it is in this vein that our boys should be so proud of their efforts and have every confidence that they are attractive prospects for future employers. Embracing continuous learning and having an innate desire for self-reflection and self-improvement; problem-solving and decision-making; embracing collaboration; emotional intelligence to maintain balance and perspective; creativity and innovation to think in different ways; adaptability, flexibility and change management: these could equally be a list of attributes which our students, through necessity, have practically had to embrace as much as a list of desirable traits for future employment. Equally importantly, it is about having the humility, decency and compassion to lead and work as part of a team with equal impact, and here RGS boys shine.

I am very proud of how our whole community has reacted to the challenges we have faced. With challenge comes change and our boys have certainly changed for the better. So, as our boys enjoy some well-earned relaxation time after the assessment period or gear themselves up for forthcoming internal examinations, I would like to congratulate them all on their industry and application in what has been the most challenging of periods. They should be rightly proud of their efforts.

Latest News

Charity: Back by popular demand for its eighth year in a row, the eagerly-anticipated and much-loved premier Guildford cooking challenge – The Great RGS Bake-Off – returned. With this year's theme of *it's not what it seems*, the RGS community rose to the challenge to create cakes which defied expectation and challenged reality, all of course for our school-nominated charities. With cakes judged on taste, decoration, originality, and the intangible wow factor, our cakesperts had their work cut out to judge the winners; these have been revealed on [social media](#). In addition, click [here](#) to see the amazing creations from boys and staff alike: it's well worth a look!

Cricket: Despite a weather-disrupted fortnight, the RGS managed to complete a handful of matches including excellent victories for the Under 18 and Under 14s against Hurstpierpoint College.

Physics: **Ishan Nathan** and **Alex Jones** have been invited to the *Isaac Physics Senior Physics Challenge* camp. This is a Lower Sixth competition and involved the students solving hundreds of demanding problems. Only the top 50 students nationwide are invited to the camp, so this is a significant achievement.

Tennis: Competitive tennis returned with RGS teams from the Under 12s to the 1st team playing inter-school matches in the last fortnight. With RGS boys acquitting themselves really well in some pretty grim weather conditions, the Under 13s were particularly notable recording back-to-back victories against Amesbury School and Farnham Heath School.

Triathlon: **Alessandro Harker** (5A) took part in his first adult triathlon: a demanding race involving top-level athletes and GB qualification. Alessandro acquitted himself very well while advertising the RGS on his branded baselayer!

Young Enterprise: Our Young Enterprise teams took part in the *Surrey Showcase Company of the Year Awards* against other regional schools. Adverts, presentations and company reports were submitted ahead of the competition and team interviews were then held on the evening. Our teams enjoyed remarkable success and swept the board with the majority of the awards. Best Advert: runner-up *RGS Firefly*, winner *RGS Growful*. Innovation Award: *RGS Growful*. Digital Skills Award: *RGS Firefly*. Sustainability Award: *RGS Arca*. Best Company: runner-up *RGS Growful*, winner *RGS Firefly*.

Important Reminder

Spectators at Home Sports Fixtures: As per our letter this week, we are pleased to advise that the move to Step 3 of the Government's roadmap allows us to welcome back spectators to home venues from this Saturday. There will no access into buildings except for toilet facilities, where they are available. Face coverings should be worn when going into the building. Spectators must observe social distancing and legal gathering size limits (groups of up to 30 outdoors). Clearly if any of your household has symptoms of Covid then you should not attend, but isolate and await a PCR result for the person with symptoms.

Currently none of our away fixtures are allowing spectators, so if you are taking your son directly to an away fixture, it remains a drop-and-go policy unless otherwise stated on the team sheet.

Thank you for your continuing support: it is very much appreciated.

