

Dear Parents,

I hope that you and your children have enjoyed a relaxing break and are now looking forward to the Summer Term ahead.

As with previous correspondence I have a number of updates to share with you, most of which are relevant to Senior School parents but may also be informative for Junior School families.

Firstly, a reminder that we have an event which may be of interest to you tonight. From 7pm-8pm, Henrietta Heald will speak about William Armstrong, Magician of the North, her biography of Lord Armstrong of Cragside. Henrietta will be speaking about how this fascinating man changed the landscape of the North East, after which I will host a Q&A. Please join us by using this link here.

Ramadan

I understand that there are families who will currently be participating in Ramadan. Particularly given the length of daylight hours at this time of year, if this applies to your child, please can I encourage that you keep your child's Head of Year informed so that we can diligently support their welfare in school.

Confirmed case of Covid-19 case over the holidays

While I am delighted to see that life has started to return to some sense of normality with the easing of certain restrictions, unfortunately we did receive a confirmed case of Covid-19 among a member of our staff during the Easter break. This serves as a reminder that we should all continue to remain vigilant and once again I would like to reassure you that the measures we have in school are in place to help to keep us all as safe as possible. One such measure is the use of lanyards which help us to ensure that students remain in their specific Year bubble. Please can I encourage you to remind your child of the importance of maintaining this system for the safety of everyone in the school.

Student home testing and recording results

Thank you to those families who continued to support us with the home testing programme by conducting tests and providing results during the holidays. We will shortly be issuing all students with new tests and, as previously, these are to be done twice weekly. Results can be easily recorded here and I would like to remind you that all families are now eligible for free testing kits which are available to order from the Government web page using this link.

Public exam update

Over the Easter break we received a lot more information regarding the public exam process for this summer. The information helps us understand the



processes we need to have in place along with the paperwork that we are required to produce.

We will need to provide parents with a copy of the school's Centre Policy that details the processes that we will be following in arriving at grades. This document will need to be approved by the exam boards and we hope to have that in the week of the bank holiday. Once we have that then we will send it to parents.

We will also send a copy of the Centre Review and Appeals Policy along with details of the evidence base that we will be using for each subject. This means that both students and parents will be clear about which evidence we are using to determine grades. It is worth reiterating that we will make our grades judgements on a holistic basis, considering all the evidence that we have identified as being appropriate. The grade decision is not a mechanical calculation based on an average weighted mark but it does need to be supported by evidence.

At the end of this week we will be sending students a copy of the scheduling of the in-class assessments that we will be running from early May. All will happen in classrooms in lesson times, but those with access arrangements will be accommodated in separate rooms to ensure that we account for their needs appropriately.

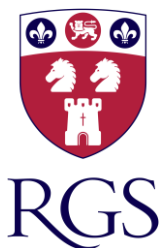
While I am very conscious that both the novelty and the complexity of this process place a significant burden on both teachers and students, I remain extremely confident in how well we know our pupils, the quality of the data that we already have for them and the guidance they have been given on what more they need to do in order to ensure the appropriate outcome for all.

Individual music tuition

Our Visiting Music Teachers have worked very hard to provide high quality individual music tuition throughout this academic year and many of our students have taken their ABRSM and LCM exams, and recorded hours of music for various school virtual events: from Friday Café concerts to Recitals and the House Music Competition. We now have places available for any students (in both Junior and Senior school) who wish to start singing or instrumental music lessons under the guidance of our VMTs. Further information can be obtained from Jill Graham, the Performing Arts Manager, Jill Graham at j.graham@rgs.newcastle.sch.uk

Sports' fixtures

You should have received an e-mail earlier this week about plans for sports over the next two weekends. The sports department are also working towards re-introducing fixtures to the sports programme in line with governing body guidance. Students will be informed via email if they have been selected for fixtures and all fixtures will be put in the school calendar. However, whether taking part in fixtures or not, I would encourage all pupils to get outside in the good weather and be active in sporting activities.



And finally

Like many institutions, the RGS was flying our flag at half-mast over the Easter break following the recent death of Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh. I suspect he will perhaps most be remembered by many people for the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme which he set up in 1956. The RGS does provide the opportunity for pupils to take part in the DofE award scheme and we were recently congratulated for having the highest completion rate of independent schools in the North East though that mostly comes down to the motivation of our pupils. Looking ahead I hope that pupils will continue to engage with this programme. However, whether taking part in the award scheme or not, a significant element of coming out of lockdown must involve encouraging young people to make use of the opportunity to engage in physical activity away from computer screens, to enjoy learning skills outside the classroom alongside contemporaries, to take part in meaningful community service activities and to get outdoors.

With all good wishes

Geoffrey Stanford

Headmaster