



Dear Parents,

I hope this finds you well and that your children are looking forward to the forthcoming break. It is important for the wellbeing of all, including those in Years 9 and 10 with internal exams in the second half of term, that they take the time to enjoy the better weather and have a good rest.

As we go into half term, this letter includes a number of updates and events to celebrate as well as an eclectic range of things to plan for and administrative reminders, all gathered in one place for simplicity's sake.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Earlier this week I held a focus group with a number of parents who had previously expressed interest in the project looking at issues of race and equality that we have been running this year. I was able to update on progress on a number of the strands of work and invited those taking part to help with suggestions on how we can continue to develop a wider culture of inclusion within the school. If any parents missed the invitation to this session but would still like to contribute to the discussion in a follow up focus group after half term, please let my assistant, Sandra Ellis, know on s.ellis@rgs.newcastle.sch.uk. I would particularly like to concentrate this session on how we can encourage students (and parents) to feel comfortable about coming forwards if an issue should occur. Indeed, I would always rather that we know if there is a concern so that we can reflect on it and be able to respond in a timely way.

Outdoors activity days (and the continuing importance of adhering to covid measures)

Meanwhile, it has been tremendous to see the return of school trips recently - as I type, our Year 7 students are engaging in the third day of various outdoor activities including Bushcraft, Coasteering, Archery and Canoeing. Those I have spoken to seem to have thoroughly enjoyed the experience on the first two days and I am sure that Year 8 will equally benefit from these opportunities for personal development after half term.

I am only sorry that a number of Year 7 pupils have missed such a formative experience through having to self-isolate. This is a real demonstration that, even as lockdown starts to ease and the requirement for face coverings around school has been relaxed, we cannot afford to be complacent about the continuing risk of transmission within the community. We continue to operate measures such as the bubble system to reduce the potential number of close contacts and please can you encourage your child to continue taking lateral flow tests twice a week.

Farewell to the Upper Sixth

In school, it was also a real privilege to be part of the (limited) audience for our first proper concert since before the pandemic earlier this week when a number of our Upper Sixth musicians had their final opportunity to perform on stage in the Miller theatre. A recording will be made available shortly once it has been appropriately edited. This event was part of a week of activities to mark the end of an era for our Class of 2021 and I would like to congratulate them for the way in which they have conducted themselves during the last two years, not least during their recent internal assessments. I hope that this last week was equally beneficial as well as an enjoyable and appropriate way to conclude their time at the school.

House music

Following the success of the Leavers' concert, all students in Years 7 to 10 have been invited to take part in House Music. The deadline for submissions is Tuesday 8th June

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and separate Teams have been created with the whole Year Group invited. As I have done for previous House events, I would strongly encourage students to get involved in this and the half term break is a perfect chance for them to record their piece. The Live Finals for each year group will take place in the Miller Theatre on Tuesday 6th July for Years 8 and 9 and on Wednesday 7th July for Years 7, which should be a fantastic way to celebrate the end of the school year. The competition for Years 3 to 6 was held last week and a recording sent out to Junior School parents which was a pleasure to watch!

Year group sports days and RGS day celebration of the year

I have previously commented on the joy of fixtures starting to take place again and, after half term, there will also be Sports Afternoons for each year group. I am looking forward to seeing students participate in these activities though, sadly owing to the numbers involved, we are not yet able to invite parents to attend. As a reminder, however, we will be inviting the RGS community to join us for an online celebration of the achievements of the Senior School over the course of this year on the evening of Friday 2nd July at 6pm. The Junior School will be holding a similar celebration on Wednesday the 7th July. I hope that you will all be able to join one or both of these events.

Summer 2021 A level and GCSE grades

We have already circulated information about the evidence that we are using to recommend Teacher Assessed Grades and, as part of the process, we are collecting information from students about any special circumstances that may need to be taken into account in our grading process. This is classed as sensitive information and we need to be sure that by collecting it, and potentially reporting it to the exam boards in the paperwork we have to collate, we remain within data protection rules.

What we intend is:

- To collect the data required by JCQ and exam boards
- To store the data securely
- To provide it as part of the TAG process to the exam boards
- To hold the data until the results are known and any appeals are complete and
- To destroy the data thereafter.

This letter does not seek specific consent as that is covered by the existing parent contract. It is merely to make you each aware of the arrangements the school intends to use in this exceptional year of exam assessments.

Meanwhile, earlier this week we heard from JCQ that our Centre Exams Policy has been approved. We are required to give parents and students access to a copy and it is accessible on the Parent Portal from the link [here](#).

Work experience

Students in Year 11 and the Lower Sixth were recently introduced to our Work Experience programme. I would strongly encourage anyone who is of the correct age to set up a work experience placement and/or volunteering opportunity over the summer. A work placement can be very valuable in a variety of ways, including helping students to find out more about working in a particular profession, to gain some experience of the workplace environment and to build the evidence of commitment and insight necessary for successful applications to university and other courses. Volunteering can teach many similar skills and, in addition to the impact students can have in the community, it teaches them to engage with people from all walks of life and understand their responsibility to contribute to society.

Threadaware and lost property clothing labels

As we head towards the end of another academic year, could I please ask you to consider donating any unused or outgrown school uniform to the school's Threadaware department, which raises money for the Bursary



Campaign. They are in particular need of PE and sportswear for both Junior School and Senior School students.

There is a large amount of unclaimed lost property currently being held in school. The staff responsible for lost property work hard to reunite items with their owners and are able to return labelled items within a week at the latest. Unfortunately, the majority of items have no labels at all and therefore remain unclaimed. It would be a great help to all involved if items of uniform were labelled. A link which may be of use to parents to help with this can be found [here](#).

Senior School arrival & departure times for the next half term

We have made some changes to our published arrival and departure times now that some senior year groups are no longer routinely in school so the following is the plan for the next half term:

Arrival			
		8th - 18th June	21st June - 8th July
Arrival 1: 8-8:15	Reception	7	
	Church Gate		
Arrival 2: 8:15-8:30	Reception	8	8
	Church Gate	10	7
Arrival 3: 8:30-8:45	Reception	9	9
	Church Gate	11	10
	Reception	12	12
Departure			
		8th - 18th June	21st June - 8th July
Exit 1: 3:30-3:40	Reception	12	12
	Church Gate	7	7
Exit 2: 3:40-3:50	Reception	8	8
	Church Gate	10	10
	Church Gate	11	9
Exit 3: 3:50-4:00	Reception	9	
	Church Gate		

Returning for the second half term on Tuesday 8 June

And finally, a quick reminder in case any have missed it that the second half of term starts for all students on Tuesday 8th June as the previous day is a Teacher Training Day. I would not want any students to come in a day early by mistake and I have no doubt that they will be glad of having this extra time at home.

With all best wishes,

Geoffrey Stanford
Headmaster