

Dear Parents,

As we come to the end of what has certainly been a most unusual year, I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for all your support and to praise your children for the resilience and maturity they have shown throughout the last 18 months.

From speaking with pupils around the school and from reading the reflections that many have written in their reports over the year, I recognise that each has had to face their own individual challenges and the experience of no two families is the same. However, I have been so impressed by the way our students have coped with change and adapted to the unexpected, from the youngest arriving new to the school in Year 3 to those who now leave for university and the wider world beyond the RGS.

Prize givings and the RGS Day celebration event

Over the last couple of weeks, we have held prize giving assemblies for each year group to celebrate the individual successes of our students. The exception to this has been Year 11 whose achievements we will celebrate once GCSE results are known. However, whether your child has won an award or not, they will each deserve praise and encouragement for their individual efforts.

The Junior School Prize Giving will be streamed tonight from 6pm, with the links sent out on Thursday in case you missed it.

Meanwhile, in order to recognise the achievements of the RGS community as a whole over the course of this year we held a celebration event on Friday in lieu of the normal RGS Day. For anyone who was unable to join us at the time, you can watch a recording of the event [here](#).

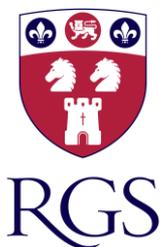
Covid-19-related matters

I expect there will be mixed emotions about this week's announcement by the Education Secretary Gavin Williamson with regards to the lifting of many Covid measures in schools that comes into effect after the end of our term. However, I am sure that your children will be looking forward to the end of being asked self-isolate as a close contact and the constraints of operating bubbles being a thing of the past.

In addition to being able to make proper use of specialist spaces such as science labs for all year groups, a particular benefit that I am looking forward to will be that older pupils will once again be able to set a leadership example to younger pupils and those in more junior years will be able to learn from the experience of those above them. While the DfE has already published some detail regarding how this change should be managed, I anticipate that there will be further guidance in advance of the new term starting in September and so we will need to update you more fully nearer the time.

In the meantime, the school is still responsible for school related close contact tracing of positive cases for the first few days of the holiday, and so if your child has a positive Lateral Flow or PCR test where they have been in school in the 48 hours before the

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earliest of that test being done, or first symptoms if they are unwell, please contact us at communications@rgs.newcastle.sch.uk. This email address will be monitored all summer though, after this initial period, the Track & Trace system should take over this monitoring and be working to reduce the impact of any new infections.

For those students who have recently been affected by the need to self-isolate and have therefore not been in school for the last weeks of term, they will be able to collect any belongings from their lockers between **Wednesday 14th July and Friday 16th July, from 9am-12pm** by accessing Brandling Reception.

A level and GCSE Results Days in August

This year results for Y13 and Y11 students are being released earlier than usual. Students in Y13 will have their results available on Tuesday 10th August and Y11 students on Thursday 12th August. Unlike last year, there is an exam board appeals procedure this year for those who are dissatisfied with their results, which is available on the [parent portal](#). Full details of what to expect on results day and how to collect results will be sent separately to the relevant year groups by Mr Loxley.

Looking ahead to new academic year

As a reminder Y7, Y12, and all new pupils induction day is on **Monday 6th September** and full details will be sent to relevant parents separately. For all other students term starts on **Tuesday 7th September**. I should note that, as the "new entrants' parents' social" did not go ahead last year, we are extending the 2021 event to the parents all of the 2020 joiners. This is planned for the evening of **Monday 4th October** and provides opportunity to meet other parents in your child's form/year group.

After having to operate at arm's length for so long, I am much looking forward to the prospect of being able to welcome parents back on site properly for the full programme of activities and events that we are planning for the new academic year. Please can I encourage parents to synchronise your online diary with our SOCS system via the school website, as this will automatically populate your diary as new 21/22 events are added to the school calendar over summer.

Some key events in September that I should highlight are the Pastoral Parents' Conferences for parents of students in the new Y7, Y10 as they start their GCSE courses and the Lower Sixth as they begin their A Level studies. These are intended to be an opportunity, early in the new school year, to meet your child's Form Supervisor and to have a chance to hear from and speak to other staff who have an important role to play in those year groups. We will send more details in September but the dates to put in your diary are:

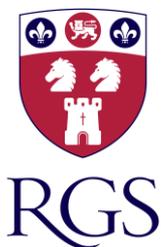
Lower Sixth – Tuesday 14th September

Year 10 – Thursday 23rd September

Year 7 – Thursday 30th September

We very much hope to be able to welcome parents into school rather than having to

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conduct these meetings virtually but will be guided by Government advice nearer the time. We anticipate these meetings will start around 4pm and finish around 6pm.

Meanwhile, despite some teething issues in the early stages of using the software, we plan to continue conducting Senior School Academic Parents' Conferences remotely. These will begin after Half Term and we will send out the full list of dates together with a schedule of grades and reports in September.

In Junior School, each class has two Parents' Conferences per year and we plan to run the first one (autumn) in person and the second one (winter/spring) remotely.

Uniform and behaviour expectations

I am conscious that in any year the start of the new academic year is time for a reset of expectations regarding behaviour and uniform. This will be particularly important given the amount of time that pupils have spent learning remotely from home and the temporary changes we have made to facilitate Covid measures this year. Over the summer, please can you check that your child has all necessary items of uniform and equipment, all labelled where necessary, as follows:

JS: We have been quite relaxed about footwear this term, but September will see a return to the need for 'proper' black school shoes. It is worth noting that on **games days only**, children are asked to come to school in, and remain in, their games kit.

Y7-11: We have shared with the students that they can expect us to revert to stricter enforcement of our dress code and usual high standards surrounding uniform and appearance come September, and have reminded them about what those usual expectations are. Details can be found in the school planner or on our website [here](#).

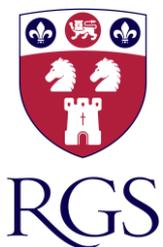
Sixth Form: Sixth Form students are role models to younger pupils and as such we expect them to accept the responsibility that comes with this visible leadership position by adhering to the Sixth Form dress code. As in the main school, from September we will be much stricter in enforcing expectations. Please consult our [dress code](#) before making purchases this summer in order to avoid disappointment in September.

Staff Leavers

Before I finish this letter, I would like to thank those staff who are moving on but will all be fondly remembered by our pupils:

Some have been with us for a relatively short time, including our two Language assistants, Ceri Morgan and Prunelle Beguier. We are also very grateful to Mark Wright in EDT, Mark Andros in Physics and Ann Stickings in Biology who have all stood in as interim teachers and I would also like to thank Sian Oakley in Psychology and Marguerite Wiggins in Chemistry for covering for colleagues on maternity leave this year.

Many of our pupils will have come across Erin Barlow who has been a member of the PE department, principally serving in the Junior School. She leaves to take up a role across the town at Dame Allans. Meanwhile, Emma Davie also leaves the sports department and we wish her well as she returns to be closer to family in Edinburgh and Richard Chadwick



moves on from being assistant Director of Sport and Head of Boys games to be Head of Academic PE at the Lancaster Royal Grammar School.

Moving further afield, Zlatan Fazlic goes to take up the post of Director of the Qatar Music academy after eight years here at the RGS and I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the contributions that Tricia Gill made in the seven years before she retired earlier this year and Julie Malpas who also retired before Christmas after long service of thirty years.

Finally, I want to celebrate the retirement of someone who is probably not known to many pupils but has fulfilled a tremendously important role as exams officer for the school. Judith Pringle has meticulously administered so many GCSE and A Level exams since she joined the RGS in 2008, not to mention a whole host of internal year group exams. Any child who has been through the Senior School will have benefited from her work.

And finally

I would like to finish by reiterating my congratulations to all students and staff for succeeding in reaching the end of such an extraordinary year and thanking parents again for all your continued support. I know that both pupils and staff are looking forward to a good rest over the summer. I wish you all a wonderful summer break with your families.

Yours sincerely

Geoffrey Stanford
Headmaster