



Re-founded 1555

Ripon Grammar School

Helping shape the future since 1555



23 July 2021

Dear Parents

I write after what has seemed the longest academic year in my memory. There is no doubt that Covid has thrown a huge number of challenges at everyone in the RGS community, from online lessons to one-way systems, teaching outside of department areas to teacher assessed grades. My thanks as always to all the staff who have worked so hard throughout and to the students who have met the changes with great fortitude and resilience. Hopefully, after a good summer rest, we will see a start to term in September that resembles normality as much as possible.

In many ways part of the joy of education was lost this year. Academic lessons remained as important as ever of course, but we temporarily lost, despite a late recovery this term, many of the wonderful things about school - sport, drama, music, trips. It was therefore a pleasure to see the school come together again for sports day on the 9 July, despite the fact that the uphill sprint of the new lower field track meant few records were broken. We have also seen the return of DofE expeditions and a range of day-trip activities for the Year 9s at Bewerley Park to name just a few. In addition, many students have continued to pursue their individual interests to great success. Thank you as always to the production team of RGS News for sharing their stories.

One casualty this year was our annual service of Commemoration in the Cathedral which normally takes place on the final morning of the year. Instead, in assemblies this week, I have asked students to reflect, in a period of huge change, on the continuities of life. One thing which binds them all together is their membership of the RGS community. It is something which they will have for life, a shared experience which can never be taken away. Good times might mix with occasional unhappy times, but times, one hopes, remembered with pride and probably a touch of nostalgia. The assembly was also an opportunity for me to remind students of our long history; of our re-foundation by Mary 1 in 1555 but also the possibility that the school existed since the foundation of St Wilfrid's monastery in 672, making us the 5th oldest school in the country. However romantic we get about this, the school has been here for at least 1000 years with our current students merely part of long thread which, one hopes, will continue to exist in at least another 1000 years. We are, in fact, a foundation of four schools - the original medieval grammar school for poor boys, the Jepson Hospital for orphaned boys founded in 1672 and which joined RGS in 1927, Bishopton House School which combined with RGS in the 1870s and Ripon Girls' High School, founded in 1909 and which joined in 1962 to make the co-educational school we are today. While history might not be your thing, we cannot but reflect that the school today has a proud legacy of education in the city of which we are all merely custodians.

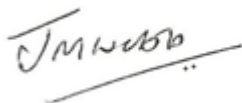
It seems therefore appropriate to thank our departing staff who have played a part, however large or small in that custodianship. Two staff particularly have dedicated a large number of years of their professional life to the school. Mr Miller, teacher of biology, and Mr Clarke, Head of RS have served the school with distinction for 36 and 20 years respectively. But we also say farewell to Ms Heslop, (who has been with us since 2006), Mrs Seymour, Mr O'Donovan, Mrs Norton, Mrs Roy and Mr Coffin. We wish them all a very happy future whether it be in a retirement well deserved or moving on to a new place of work.

And now we look to the future with great anticipation too. We all hope that the results days on August 10 and 12 bring the grades our Year 13 and 11 hope for and deserve, and provide that important passport to the next stage of life be it university, school, apprenticeship or a gap year. All our leavers, including staff, become Old Riponians. We wish them all well in whatever path life takes.

The school itself will also welcome a new set of staff - too numerous to list here. It will start with probably record number in our boarding community and our sixth form. In addition, over the summer the estates team will be as busy as ever, if not more busy than usual, as we install a new Food Technology room funded by the Wolfson Foundation, a new suite of boarding accommodation in School House and completion of further security work outside.

I wish you all a very restful and healthy summer and look forward to welcoming all our students, old and new, in September.

Best wishes



Jonathan Webb
Headmaster

Key dates to note:

A Level results	Tuesday, 10 August
GCSE results	Thursday, 12 August
Y7 and Y12 students only return to school	Tuesday, 7 September
School opens for all other students	Wednesday, 8 September
Christmas holidays	Friday, 17 December* - Tuesday, 4 January

*School will now close for Christmas holidays at 3.55pm on Thursday, 16 December. This is an extra day in lieu of The Queen's Platinum Jubilee which is on 2 June and falls during half term.