



# Ripon Grammar School

*Helping shape the future since 1555*



*Re-founded 1555*

4 December 2019

Dear Parents

Last year I wrote to you at Christmas and mentioned, in passing, the political turmoil gripping Westminster. I am not sure I could have predicted then that we would be in the midst of a general election campaign now. In assemblies last week I invited the year groups to engage in the political debate, perhaps with parents over the evening meal, so apologies if that has occasioned any heated arguments. Next Wednesday we will be holding our own general election in school. Already the party candidates are at the hustings and will be delivering their message in assemblies prior to the vote. It will be interesting to see how the result compares to the national picture the following day.

It has been good to watch our students finally being able to utilise the new 3G facility this week with several matches of rugby and football played against visiting sides. The official opening of the new facility, which includes a superb new changing room, will be in the New Year but I would like to thank Persimmon Homes for the financial assistance they have given without which the project would never have materialised. There are still some areas of landscaping to be completed but this will now wait until the spring temperatures allow for sowing. I do hope it will continue to provide an excellent resource for both boys' and girls' sport in the years to come and Mr Milner will be emailing a separate message about more technical aspects of use soon.

To update you on staffing news there will be a few changes next term. Sadly, for the school, Mrs Howes will be leaving us at the end of this term after 26 years of distinguished service that also included a period as head of art. In her place, Mrs Rosalind Newby joins us from Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Girls where she is currently curriculum lead for art. In January/February Mrs Dodd will take maternity leave and Mr Long a period of shared paternity leave and their psychology and history teaching will be covered by Mr Patrick Fenwick and Mr Edward Webb respectively.

We are currently recruiting for a new post of Assistant Head [Boarding] for next September or earlier. This post will be an addition to the senior leadership team and will allow Miss Murray to relinquish her role as head of boarding in order to focus on her other significant role as pastoral deputy head. The new assistant head will also combine the post with the position of senior houseparent of one of our boarding houses as well as having some teaching responsibilities. As part of this plan, we have introduced central dining for all our boarders to allow utilisation of the current kitchen space in Johnson House to provide much needed family-sized accommodation for our resident staff.

I would also like to update you on a couple of other school developments which will, I hope, have an impact on the quality of educational and pastoral outcomes for our students. In recent months, we have been looking at how we report on student progress and attitudes to

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learning. There will, as a consequence, be some changes to our current system of effort, forecast and target grading which will be in place for the next reporting cycle for Years 7-10 and Mr Auger will be writing to all parents explaining the changes this week. We will also continue to review our curriculum in light of changes to the new Ofsted framework which was introduced from this September.

The new pastoral centre has been a successful development this year and I do hope the addition of year heads for Years 7-9 and the introduction of a pastoral support officer ensures that students are able to access the support they need. We are currently auditing our tutor and PSHCEe programme to ensure that we accommodate not only the latest government guidance in our curriculum but also ensure our students are able to discuss and reflect up the many complex topics which affect young people today.

We are also currently in the process of tendering for our catering services for September 2020. We have decided to do this to ensure that our students, both boarding and day, continue to receive a high quality service that reflects our drive to deliver healthy eating, reduce waste and provide innovative menus.

As we near the end of what has been a busy term I would like to draw your attention to the latest, dare I say 'bumper', edition of RGS News that has some important updates on our charity week, sporting and musical successes, and reports on events such as house drama. I also know that auditions and planning are already under way for forthcoming productions of Little Shop of Horrors and the junior production of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. I would therefore like to extend a warm invitation to you all for our Christmas Concert in the hall on Tuesday 10 December at 7 pm and our Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols in the Cathedral on Tuesday 17 December at 7.30 pm. Both events are always a very special showcase of the musical talent in the school and not to be missed. I know those involved are practising hard for the events.

Finally, I would like to wish all members of the RGS community, both parents and guardians, staff and students a very happy Christmas and New Year.

Yours sincerely

**Jonathan M Webb**  
Headmaster

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