



Friday 26th March, 2021

Dear Parents,

It seems strange to be writing an end-of-term newsletter having only had the whole school physically back with us for just three weeks. However, it has been wonderful to hear the positive feedback from all the staff about how well your children have settled back into the school routine and to see their happy faces as they have been reunited with their friends. It certainly feels like a step in the right direction after the challenging last 12 months and we are very excited about what lies ahead in the Summer Term and beyond. I have enjoyed my Zoom assemblies with them all but cannot wait to be reunited with them as we return in April!

In this newsletter, I will reflect on some of the great things that have happened this term despite the lockdown challenges but as importantly I would like to take the opportunity to look forward to what we have planned for next term.

Recent News

Year 6 ESB: Our Year 6 pupils have been busy during these last few weeks undertaking our in-house ESB (English Speaking Board) test achieving some fantastic results (14 Distinction, 11 Merit Plus, 10 Merit) and we say a huge well done to everyone! They have also been voicing their concerns about climate change by drafting letters to local MP, Alex Chalk. It will be interesting to read his responses.

Virtual Cross Country: A number of our Year 5 and 6 children have enjoyed taking part in the U11 Boys and Girls Malvern National Cross-Country 3K. It was an optional event and we had 19 boys and 19 girls participating. Everyone did really well and the top six boys and girls combined across both years have also been entered individually. We are waiting to hear the final results back from Malvern but the strong tradition of cross country continues here at Richard Pate.

Year 6 Destinations and Year 5 Meetings: On the 1st March we discovered where our current Year 6s have been offered places in state schools for September. We have also been receiving information from the independent schools about offers of places and scholarships as well. The children have once again excelled themselves through this process, and even more so this year after a particularly challenging time. As I updated in a previous newsletter, 21 of the children had achieved the qualifying score for at least one of the grammar schools and 7 of those had achieved the required score for Pate's Grammar. We have been busy working with our local independent schools and while fewer have pursued scholarships this year we did have 6 offers that covered academics, sport, music and drama. We believe we have arrived at the definitive list of places and this year's cohort will be moving on to 15 different schools. We have 16 children attending all the Gloucestershire Grammars except Ribston next year and that includes our first girl to attend the Crypt School since it went co-educational. We also have 9 children going to five different comprehensive schools including Bournside, Balcarras, The Cotswold School, High School Leckhampton and Winchcombe. In addition,

we have 11 children going to four different independent schools including Cheltenham Ladies' College, Dean Close, King's and St Edward's. I have been meeting with many of our Year 5 parents to discuss the range of options for their children in 2022. We are now aware that this year's application window for applying to sit the grammar school test will be open from Monday 17th May until Wednesday 30th June and that the test will be held on Saturday 11th September. The following link has more information on the process: <https://www.patesgs.org/pgsuploads/Timeline-key-dates-for-2022-entry-Pates.pdf>

RPS Alumni: I am always delighted to hear about news of our Alumni and have been particularly heartened to hear recent news of several of our ex-pupils achieving official appointments at their various schools. I am very proud to hear that we currently have RPS Alumni in the following roles at local senior schools:

- Pate's Grammar School: 7 in the latest list of House Official appointments for next year and that includes the position of either Head Boy or Head Girl in four of the five houses at Pate's
- Head Boy and Deputy Head Boy at King's School, Gloucester
- Head Boy at St Edward's School

I often only hear this news anecdotally so there may well be some that I am unaware of. If you have any Alumni news, please drop me an email as I always enjoy hearing about their future endeavours.

Appointments for September: We will be shortlisting the candidates for our SENDCo position next week and we have been delighted with the quality of interested applicants so far. We will also be looking at Teaching Assistant recruitment early next term to add to our excellent team who already support classroom intervention activities throughout the School.

Looking forward

As we emerge from the last year, I am very excited about the future and our plans to continue our investment in the facilities at the School. Over the coming year, we are planning further investment in our IT, specifically looking at a new generation of interactive whiteboards for our classrooms and upgrading the hardware machines in the computer suite and library. We are also very excited to be investing in a new website for the School, which we hope will provide you, our existing parents, with a better experience when looking for information. We also want it to better reflect our School and our pupils of whom we are so proud. Other scheduled projects include roof repairs, toilet upgrades and the installation of a dividing curtain on the astro so that more activities can safely take place at one time.

As we cautiously return to some sort of normality, we are also planning to reinstate many of our Summer Term activities (where guidelines allow) including the Year 6 production, Charity Day, Prep and Junior Sports Day and many others. It certainly promises to be a fun and busy term for all! Our wonderful PTA has also been working feverishly behind the scenes, planning various activities and I attach a letter from Mrs Hall with more detail.

Summer Term

We will be continuing to monitor the Government guidance over the Easter holidays. Until we hear otherwise, we are planning to return to School next term on the same basis as we are currently operating with year group bubbles and staggered drop off and pick up times. We will be sending

separate information with the details and will of-course keep you updated as and when anything changes.

In conclusion, it is certainly a time for reflection and I know I have said it before, but I am so proud of just how well your children have coped with the challenges they have faced over the last year. I would also like to reiterate my thanks to you as parents for supporting them through this period and also of-course to my wonderful team of staff who have worked tirelessly both in the classroom and on Showbie. We are not through the woods yet but there is definitely a glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel and I am feeling optimistic and excited about the next few months, and I cannot wait to return to my School office on April 1st! I wish you all a very well-deserved Easter break. Please stay safe and well and we look forward to seeing your children back in School on Monday 19th April.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert MacDonald". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and slightly larger than the others.

Robert MacDonald
Headmaster