



Royal School, Armagh

Dear Parent or Guardian,

It's hard to believe that pupils are returning to school, and you might be tempted to ask, "what happened to the summer?" Not only did the time seem to fly by but the weather only ever teased us with what might have been. Whatever you did and wherever you were during the summer, I hope that you had a restful and refreshing time.

For those of you whose children are returning to school – welcome back. Those of you who are new to RSA are also very welcome. Thank you for the trust you are placing in us; we do not take it for granted and we look forward to working in partnership with you in the months ahead. I hope that you find the information below helpful. Each school year brings new opportunities and challenges, and we aim to support you and your children through each transition. We are excited about the year ahead and we look forward to working in partnership with you.

New staff appointments

At the end of last term we said farewell to some long serving colleagues and, at the start of this term, we welcome some new faces.

We wish the following a happy and successful time as they commence their time at RSA:

- Mr A. Irvine, Technology & Design
- Mrs C. Gordon, Mathematics
- Miss. K Boyle, English
- Ms A. Prescott, Religious Studies on a Friday
- Mr N. Gamble, Physics on a Monday
- Miss H. Brownlee and Miss M. Spillane will work this year in the PE department.

We convey our best wishes and congratulations to Mrs L. McConnell and Mrs L. Mallon who will be away from school for much of next year on maternity leave.

A number of colleagues have been appointed to new roles and we wish them well.

- Mrs A. Murdock will be a Sixth Form head of year, starting with Year 13
- Mrs L. Shufflebottom will become the head of technology & design
- Mrs C. Philips has been appointed as the head of Year 8
- Mr P. McClure will assume responsibility as head of Mathematics
- Mr R. Moore will be head of Year 9

Exam results:

As a school community we are delighted at the success of our pupils at GCSE, AS and A Level. We congratulate them all on their success and convey best wishes to the 'leavers' who now move on to the next exciting phase of their education and training.

Speech Night

This annual event held in the beautiful St Mark's Parish church is always a lovely way to celebrate achievement as a school community and hear an inspiring address from an Old Armachian. This year we are delighted that the speaker will be Professor Nola Hewitt-Dundas, Pro Vice Chancellor of Queens University, Belfast <https://pure.qub.ac.uk/en/persons/nola-hewitt- Dundas>. Whatever stage your children are at you will be welcome to join us at 7:30pm on Thursday 19 September.

Readiness to learn

At the start of the year pupils will spend some time in guided discussions with staff about their attitude and approach to learning. These discussions are designed to set the tone for the year ahead and we encourage you to discuss your child's learning at home. Academic success does not happen without sustained academic effort and pupils should have some work each evening, this is particularly the case with senior pupils who, even if they have no homework for a particular evening should usefully spend time reading around their subjects. To support learning, we ask that absence is kept to a minimum throughout the year, please restrict non emergency medical appointments to outside school hours if possible.

Each year there will be a range of educational trips and visits, these add greatly to the quality of the educational experience. Not every opportunity has to be availed of however and we encourage you to use your discretion to ensure a balance between engagement in trips and attendance at class.

Bus Passes and Transport Claims

Home to school transport assistance must be applied for through the Education Authority (EA) online application process. Please note the school is not involved in this process and has no involvement in the granting of transport assistance. Further information on eligibility for transport assistance and how to apply can be found on the Education Authority website at the following link: www.eani.org.uk/transport. Assistance with information about bus transport may be obtained from the Concourse Office.

School Play

This year's musical, *'The Sound of Music'* will be performed in the Assembly Hall on the evenings of 27-29 November (inclusive). Please note the date and look out for the announcement of the ticket release.

School uniform

The uniform represents an investment by parents and a very public statement about the standards of this school. How it is worn is a very public statement about our young people. We ask for your assistance in ensuring the following in line with the appearance code:

- *Skirts* – worn no higher than the knee and not ‘rolled up’ at the waist;
- *Hair* – tidy style, a natural colour with the avoidance of ‘extremes’ in style. Boys’ hair should not be worn lower than collar length;
- *Make up* – this must be discreet – if it can be easily seen, it’s not discreet enough and pupils are liable to be asked to remove it;
- *Shoes* – plain black leather only with low heels; please avoid canvas shoes or ‘work trainers’;
- *Piercings* – one stud only may be worn in each ear by girls only;
- *Nail varnish* – permitted in subdued/neutral colours only;
- *Gel nails etc.* – these are not permitted;
- *Hoodies* – only the official school hoodie may be worn under blazers to and from school and only as part of the full uniform. They may not be worn in corridors unless as part of the official PE uniform. We are pleased that each year a number of teams or trips produce tops with the school crest or team name as a memento of pupil involvement. However, please bear in mind that these tops are not part of the school uniform and may not be worn as such.
- Pupils are required to change back into their full uniform after games classes before leaving the school grounds.

Pupil care protocol

School no longer operates a sick bay. If a pupil is unwell at school, the following steps will be implemented:

- The pupil should advise their teacher immediately that they feel ill or, if it is during change over or at break or lunch a member of staff in the Concourse Office;
- Pupils will be encouraged to remain in class where possible where they can be under the supervision of a teacher;
- If the pupil feels too ill to be in class, they will wait in the concourse area which is spacious and well-ventilated and where they can be observed by staff;
- If, after a time resting out of class, the pupil still feels too ill to be in class, parents/guardians will be notified by staff to collect their child from the concourse;
- Water, tissues, and where appropriate (and prescribed) medication, will be provided for the pupil who is unwell;
- Pupils should not make their own arrangements to go home or leave school without permission as school retains the responsibility to know their whereabouts.

Home/ School Communication

Effective communication is a priority for us. While there are regular parent teacher meetings across the year, we understand there may be other occasions when you will want to speak to staff. You will always be welcome at school.

To ensure that the member of staff you need to speak to is available and in possession of the information they may need for your meeting, please ring ahead to make an appointment.

If you ring to speak with a member of staff, please bear in mind that the bulk of a teacher's day is spent in the classroom with pupils, and it may not be possible for your call to be returned that day. When you ring, please be prepared to provide reception staff with some basic information such as:

- *Your full name.*
- *The nature of your inquiry.*
- *The telephone number you would like to be reached at if you require a call back.*

Please do not ask for an urgent call back unless the matter is actually urgent, as in time sensitive. If you wish to inform us about a safeguarding concern, an appointment is **not** necessary.

In line with the school's Email Etiquette, we do not routinely share staff email addresses without permission; however, emails may be sent to info@royalschool.com. When you are contacting a member of staff, please remember that, because the bulk of a teacher's time is spent teaching in class, there should not be an expectation that emails will be seen or responded to immediately. As a 'rule of thumb' our staff will aim to respond to emails within 4 working days of receiving them. Day one is the day *after* the email is received.

Please ensure that your contact details are up to date and advise the concourse office of any changes, particularly with preferred email addresses.

In the next few days information about events in the year ahead will be loaded onto the school website. The Parent Handbook can also be accessed by selecting the 'about' tab on the website and choosing 'parents'.

Lunchtime

If you wish your child to purchase food in school, please ensure that the relevant parent pay account has credit. We regret that we cannot ordinarily provide food to pupils where there are no funds available in the account. Sixth Form may leave the school grounds at lunch time in line with conditions which have been explained to them; they may not use their cars at lunchtime.

School grounds:

As part of our constant drive to ensure security on site, the back gates leading from the grounds to Charlemont Gardens will soon be operating on our access control system meaning they will be accessible only at prearranged times or with an electronic pass.

Car park

Due to lack of space parking on the school site is limited to staff and visitors only. Pupils are not permitted to park in the school grounds. To ensure the safety of everyone using the school site only pupils in the Preparatory Department may be dropped off or collected in the grounds. The exception to this is in cases where a pupil has mobility issues which should be discussed with Mr Cardwell. We have received a number of complaints from local residents about pupil parking and would ask that pupils who are fortunate enough to have their own car to bring to school show courtesy to local residents and should also arrive to school in time to get parked and be at registration punctually.

After School hours

For insurance purposes I must ask that all day pupils, who are not participating in supervised activities after school, leave the grounds by 3:30pm. Any pupil who encounters difficulty getting home should report to either of the vice principals or to me.

Schools function best when they function as part of a dynamic community, and we look forward to working with many partners in the year ahead. Please contact us if you believe there is anything we can do to be of assistance to you or your children.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Graham GW Montgomery'.

Graham GW Montgomery
Headmaster