



Ripon Grammar School

4 April 2025

From the Headmaster

Dear Parents/Guardians

I am sure all students are looking forward to the end of term. The Spring Term is one which seems to start in the gloom of January and end with the thermometer rising, the daffodils in full bloom and the sound of grass being mown.

The end of term has been notable for several wonderful school events including our drama production of 'The Taming of the Shrew', which showcased some superb acting talent, the equally marvellous Spring Concert during which music colours and badges being awarded, and last night a boarders' Spring Ball planned by the lower sixth of Johnson House, to name just a few. The Year 10s have just completed two very successful Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award practice expeditions in Nidderdale and the Gold practices begin over Easter with a large number of students involved. Similarly, over Easter the History and Politics department will be departing for the USA to visit New York and Washington. All these events serve as an important reminder as to how varied and vibrant the school's trip programme remains. Thank you to all staff who give up their time generously to these and many more co-curricular activities. Please see RGS News for further details!

This term we say goodbye to several departing staff including:

- Mrs Peach, who is retiring and leaves us after 4 years dedicated service as our librarian. Mrs O'Donnell will join us in May to continue the work of the library.
- Mrs Solden retires also after 11 years' service in the Food and Nutrition department. Generations of students have enjoyed Mrs Solden's inspirational style. Mrs Young from Easingwold School joins us in the Food Room next term.
- Mr Spiers leaves us [after his second stint] at RGS as Housemaster of School House since 2021, and takes up a well earned promotion as Deputy Head at Red House School, Darlington. We will be looking forward to the arrival of Mr Davies-Taylor, currently at Lancaster Royal GS, as Housemaster in September. In the interim Mrs Day will be acting housemistress of School House.

Over Easter there will be lots of ongoing estates work with the part-completion of Phase 3 of our IT project with new computer screens in the HL and Sixth Form centre, renovations in the North Corridor as part of our efforts to upgrade those classrooms and ongoing renovation and redecoration of boys' boarding.

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Founded in Saxon Times, re-founded in 1555

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Next term I will be relaunching the school's appeal for donations to the Development Fund. As you may have seen in the news, central government funding continues to lag behind school costs and recent increases have made matters worse. I will be writing to all parents with more detail about this but in the meantime if you are able to make a monthly donation to allow the school to function in its current way the students would be incredibly grateful. Monthly donations are but a click away and the QR code is at the bottom of this letter.

Next term we will be passing on our very best wishes to our Year 11 and 13 cohorts who will be undertaking public examinations. No doubt all those students will be working hard over Easter on their revision. With study leave starting on Friday 9 May, time is flying past fast! I have just completed the Year 13 reports and I must say I was very impressed by the overall evidence of hard work and dedication the year group are demonstrating.

Also, as advanced notice, on **1 and 2 May** there will be a film crew in school developing a promotional video for the school. There will be a further reminder on this nearer the time, but as a reminder **students should be wearing winter uniform on those two days. As a result, we are delaying the point at which students can wear summer uniform until Tuesday 6 May.**

One further change I would like to announce for next term is the renaming of the day house, currently **School House, to Holland House**. This change is in response to student requests that the day house's name reflects the contribution women have made to the school over the years. Never one to neglect a chance for a little history (keen-eyed quizzers going to the Friend's quiz night please note...) most of our Houses were created in 1906 with names as below:

- **Hutton** – after Archbishop of Canterbury Matthew Hutton, who joined RGS in 1701.
- **Porteus** - after writer, preacher and Bishop of London Beilby Porteus, a keen supporter of the movement to abolish slavery, who joined RGS in 1744.
- **De Grey** - after Earl de Grey, the son of the first marquis of Ripon, a generous benefactor of the school who paid for the Clocktower building when the school relocated from the St Agne's Gate in the 1870s.

We will retain the names School House and Johnson House as the names of the physical boarding houses but all boarders, and some day students, will be members of Holland House. (If you are confused, don't worry - the students will understand!) Barbara Holland herself attended Ripon Girls' High School, became a teacher at RGS, then Head of Johnson House (created in 1962 as a girls' boarding house when the Girls' High School – now flats off College Lawns - combined with RGS and named after the last

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headmistress of the (Girls' School), and then Senior Mistress from 1980-87. Miss Holland was also an England Hockey Player in the 1950s, becoming All England President for Hockey in 1987. In 1992 she was awarded the OBE for services to hockey. This will be a fitting tribute to a life in the service of education and hockey and sport and a recognition of the contribution girls make to the school.

Wishing all a peaceful Easter.

Jonathan Webb Headmaster



[Ripon Grammar School Development Fund - Donate now \(cafonline.org\)](https://cafonline.org),

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