



Headmaster's Weekly Bulletin

15 SEPTEMBER 2023

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Introduction

'It is not the winning. It is how you win. The people you win with. The group of people that you are connected to. I think that human connection is the ultimate marker of success.'

Alex Danson (GB Hockey player)

In 2023-2024, Reading School is emphasising Culture, Character, and Collaboration as key aspects of its educational mission to promote human flourishing.

Cultural capital is viewed as essential for the social mobility of young students, and Professor Damian Hughes, amongst others, has played an influential role in supporting us to reflect on our values and behaviours. The school aims to instil a culture of high performance, emphasising the importance of motivation, behaviour, and culture at both the individual and organisational levels.

Members of the Senior Leadership Team have recently attended conferences hosted by Damian Hughes and will seek to improve our approach to high performance. We must never be complacent or think that we have the answers. We can showcase our bright spots, such as our Future Stories programme, but sustainable excellence relies on engagement with a culture of commitment to compassionate, healthy, high performance.

Reading School is committed to providing diverse opportunities for its students, including collaborations with figures like Olympian Laurence Halsted, who will host Sixth Formers and Boarders in Copenhagen for an introduction to the culture and sport of Denmark. Furthermore, we are looking forward to hosting representatives from Finland who will share the secret sauce of their approach to culture and character. Their message is that high social capital, wellbeing and enhanced life chances and educational success are closely aligned. We look forward to learning how shared values should inform everyday practice, a strong community identity and a sense of place.

Character development is at the core of Reading School's approach to education, with the goal of producing well-rounded individuals who make a positive impact on their community and the world. The school collaborates with various leading organisations and experts to emphasise qualities such as compassion, resilience, safety and service orientation. This commitment is exemplified by ongoing collaborations with Dr Phil Cummins, the Jubilee Centre, University of Birmingham, Sir Roy Blatchford, who will be reviewing our approach to reading in October, and Ms Rhian Williams, who will be reviewing and verifying good practice in the crucial spheres of safeguarding and boarding.

Our approach to seeking the views of external experts is consistent with the advice of Professor Alex Hill, so that we display one of the habits of an enduring organisation. We are looking forward to working with Mr Hill later this term on two projects that will strengthen our commitment to both a 'disruptive edge and a stable core.' We want external experts as well as stakeholders to question and challenge and help us review what we do. This includes looking for the success in the failure, and the failure in the success in order to enable us to improve.

Looking forward, Reading School seeks to reflect on best practices, foster a commitment culture for academic and character excellence, and continue its mission of promoting excellence and positive social change in collaboration with students, parents, and external partners as it approaches its 900th anniversary.

Mr A M Robson
Headmaster

Key information

Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 only

Personal development for students at Reading School

The Electives program takes place daily as part of the taught curriculum, with all students in Year 7-10 participating. More details about the programme can be found on the [school website](#).

The schedule of this terms' Electives program is included for reference for students and parents and can be accessed by [clicking here](#).

Sitting alongside the Electives program is our Co-curricular program, designed to enable our students to extend their aspirations, skills and range of interests beyond the classroom, and to help them to develop socially and emotionally so that they can grow in maturity and self-confidence.

Our [Co-curricular program](#) complements the learning that students take part in and gives them all an opportunity to extend their interests, to collaborate with other students and to contribute to the broader life of the school in a range of areas. It allows all pupils the opportunity to develop their self-confidence, organisation and leadership skills as well as providing a chance to build relationships with a range of students. All vital life skills that will benefit student's development now and into the future.

The schedule of this Co-curricular program is included for reference for students and parents and can be accessed by [clicking here](#).

Students and parents can refer to the [school website](#) during the academic term to download the most up to date schedules of activities.

Year 9 and 10 only

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE)

DofE runs for students in Year 9 and above. Places are limited and sign-up for this year's program will be from Friday 29 September, with details included in the Headmaster's Bulletin on that day.

There are a fixed number of places at Bronze level for students in Year 9 and 10.

Students that have completed their Bronze Award will be offered the chance to sign up for Silver.

Year 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 only

Combined Cadet Force (CCF)

The CCF started again for students on Thursday 14 September for students in Year 10 and above.

Taster and selection evening for Year 9s is on Thursday 21 September.

For all CCF enquiries, please email ccf@reading-school.co.uk

Year 7 only

Expectations Evening

Please click the links below to access last week's Year 7 Expectations Evening Presentation which included important information in relation to: key dates, curriculum updates, character updates, safety and wellbeing, careers and working together to ensure students continue to thrive during their journey at Reading School.

[Year 7 Presentation \(Recording\)](#)

[Year 7 Presentation \(Slides\)](#)

Year 8 only

Presentation evening will be on Tuesday 19 September from 7pm online.

Year 9 only

Expectations Evening

Please click the links below to access this week's Year 9 Expectations Evening Presentation which included important information in relation to: key dates, curriculum updates, character updates, safety and wellbeing, careers and working together to ensure students continue to thrive during their journey at Reading School.

[Year 9 Presentation \(Recording\)](#)

[Year 9 Presentation \(Slides\)](#)

Year 10 only

Expectations Evening

Please click the links below to access this week's Year 10 Expectations Evening Presentation which included important information in relation to: key dates, curriculum updates, character updates, safety and wellbeing, careers and working together to ensure students continue to thrive during their journey at Reading School.

[Year 10 Presentation \(Recording\)](#)

[Year 10 Presentation \(Slides\)](#)

Year 11 only

Presentation evening will be on Wednesday 20 September from 7pm online.

Year 12 only

Expectations Evening

Please [click this link](#) to access last week's Year 12 Expectations Evening Presentation which included important information in relation to: key dates, Sixth Form life, outcomes and subject

choices, foundations for academic success, pastoral support, leadership, character and community service, planning for the future and the role you play.

Year 13 only

Expectations Evening

Please [click this link](#) to access this week's Year 13 Expectations Evening Presentation which included important information in relation to: Sixth Form Team, what is different about Year 13, Foundations for academic success, UCAS information, pastoral support, leadership, character, community service and the role you play.

All years

Allergies

We would like to remind, indeed urge, parents and students to be mindful in relation to allergies and what food is brought to school. Although we are not a 'nut free' school, we would like to raise awareness of the impact that bringing nuts into school can have on students and staff who may have allergies. Foods that can cause severe allergic reactions for those affected by allergens include packaged nuts, peanut butter, chocolate spreads containing nuts, cereal, granola, chocolate bars containing nuts, cakes or biscuits containing nuts, peanut based sauces (like satay) and any food made with sesame seeds (this list is not exhaustive).

Both children and adults with severe nut allergies can suffer from life-threatening reactions if they eat, smell, or touch any foods containing nuts. We are therefore grateful for your cooperation in helping to keep our pupils and staff safe.

[Allergy UK](#) is a nationwide charity for people living with an allergy and has resources for parents to access.

Mathematics Department Notice

All students are expected to have a scientific calculator for Mathematics lessons. For any student who does not have a calculator, we would recommend the **Casio FX85GT**, which can be purchased through the school at a cost of £11.60 for those students in Years 7 to 11.

For students in Years 10 or 11 who will go onto choose A Level Mathematics, we would recommend the purchase of the **Casio Classwiz FX 991CW**, which can be purchased through the school at a cost of £22.24.

If you would like to buy either of the calculators for your child, you will need to pay by Tuesday 26 September through [My Child at School](#). Calculators will be given out by your child's class teacher.

Sixth Form

In addition to the Casio Classwiz FX 991CW calculator, Sixth Form mathematicians have the option of buying a graphical calculator to help with their course. This is not compulsory. Your child should discuss this with their class teacher to see if it is appropriate for them and will mainly benefit those studying Further Mathematics A-level, during Year 13. They can buy a **Casio FX CG50** for £74.90 and will need to pay by Tuesday 26 September. Calculators will be given out by their class teacher.

Should any families require financial support, please email your child's tutor or maths teacher in confidence.

Lost Property

The lost property department has collected a vast amount of personal property which includes: watches, phones, glasses, jewellery, pencil cases and many, many water bottles. During break times, we are encouraging all students to reclaim their property by visiting the Attendance Office which can be found in the Cloisters.

Associate Staff Vacancies

Combined Cadet Force (CCF) Adjutant

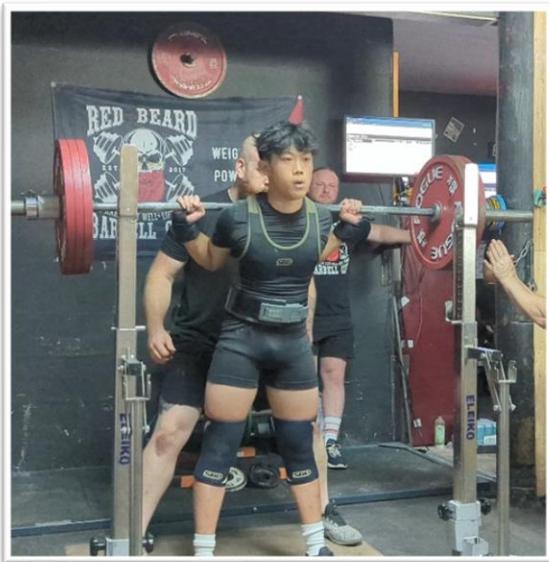
We have an exciting opportunity for an experienced administrator to join our team as CCF Adjutant. Our ideal candidate will have either Cadet Forces experience or an interest to join our Combined Cadet Force (CCF).

Click [here](#) for more information.

Excellence, Belonging & Community

Excellence in Powerlifting

As featured across our social media channels earlier this week, we would like to congratulate Rajan D (13E) for breaking 2 records during the British Powerlifting regionals last Sunday 10 September. When speaking with Rajan earlier this week about his achievement, his first comment was to also speak with Ryan Luo (12L) who competed alongside him during the competition, rather than to dwell on his own accomplishments. We met with Ryan this week to talk to him more:



Q: Can you tell us a little more about the Powerlifting Competition last Sunday?

A: So, the competition was held in Maidenhead and the way it works is you have three different lifts. The squat, the bench-press and the deadlift and you have three attempts to get the biggest lift you can and at the end of the competition, the lifter with the biggest total, the most kilos wins. It was a great experience for both of us and our very first time competing.

Q: How did you do?

A: I did all right. I came third in my class, and I didn't miss any attempt. So as far as a first-time attempt went, I didn't have any complaints!

Q: For those who don't know anything about powerlifting, how much did you lift?

A: On the squat, I managed 175 kilos. My bench, 82 kilos and a half and the deadlift I managed 210 kilos...so around 467 kilos in total.

Q: How did you get started in powerlifting?

A: A lot of students in my year started going to gym at school about a year ago and everyone kind of starts by doing three main lifts. It's kind of like a universal thing. And I realised I enjoyed training and competition. I guess it started off as a bit of an ego thing but over time, it becomes enjoyable in trying to work to a tangible target. To try and hit the heaviest weight you can and then you just get quite invested into it.

Q: I'm interested in your use of the word 'ego', can you share your thoughts about how boys your age possibly start out in the gym wanting to look good, as opposed to getting fit or increasing confidence?

A: Some of us may spend time on social media and see bodybuilders or actors that look great so we can start wanting to go to the gym. But I found that going to the gym with friends became fun...going along for sessions and everyone getting into it together. Just working every session to improve oneself...it may start off with wanting to look good. I'd say if you're just doing it to look good, you're not going to last very long doing it consistently because I'd say that's not a great goal.

Q: What have you personally got out of powerlifting?

A: I'm only just getting into it and I'd say I've developed my self-control and discipline.

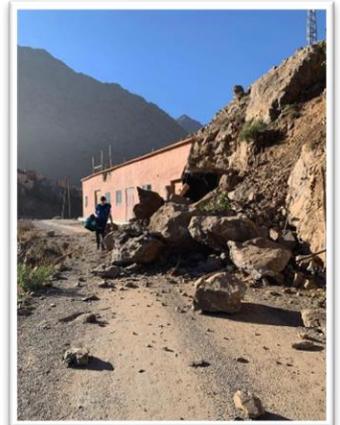
Q: What's next for you?

A: Both Rajan and I qualified for the Nationals next year, so hopefully we can both enter and see how we do.

Belonging & Community

Charity

In a twist of fate that would test their resilience, two brothers, Old Redingensians, Duncan Toms (OR 2013), an Associate Director and Multi-Asset Strategist at HSBC, and Kieran Toms (OR 2015), a dedicated medical doctor, found themselves amidst the turmoil of Morocco last week. As the clock struck 11 pm local time, a devastating earthquake of staggering magnitude, 6.8, shattered the tranquillity of Morocco. Its epicentre, nestled in the High Atlas mountains, approximately 72 kilometres southwest of the enchanting city of Marrakech, unleashed a cataclysmic force that claimed nearly 3,000 lives and left over 5,000 individuals grappling with grievous injuries. The quake left a trail of destruction in its wake, reducing buildings and infrastructure to rubble, and rendering thousands of people homeless.



Despite the harrowing ordeal, both Duncan and Kieran, emerged from the tempest with their lives intact. In an inspiring display of compassion and altruism, they are now sharing their first-hand experiences, recognising that the calamity they endured could have befallen anyone.

In the following account, Duncan recounts the nightmarish events that unfolded:



Last week I was on holiday in Morocco, trekking in the High Atlas Mountains. For five days we enjoyed an incredible trekking holiday in a beautiful part of the world, including a successful summit of Mount Toubkal. On Friday night, we stayed just outside the picturesque village of Imlil. This was a little over 40km from the epicentre of the earthquake.

The noise was deafening as the mountain crumbled and boulders hurtled down the valley. The gite we were staying in shook so violently I was sure the building was about to collapse. With another enormous crash our concrete bedroom ceiling gave way (see first picture below). I escaped via the terrace while my brother survived by hiding under the bed.

We evacuated to the sounds of screaming as dust filled the valley and blocked all light from the stars. Incredibly, there were very few casualties in our immediate vicinity. Loud aftershocks occurred throughout the night as we waited in a dried-up riverbed with local people, away from further rockfalls. These local Berber villagers showed us amazing kindness, providing us with blankets for warmth during a cold and scary night.

Power and phone signal were completely lost. I expect it still is. On Saturday, we left most of our stuff behind to trek out of the mountains. We walked all day through scenes of devastation, including tarpaulin covers over people not so fortunate to escape with their lives. Enormous boulders that fell blocked roads, preventing vehicles from getting to supplies and aid where it is needed most.



A 74-year-old villager told me during the night that he, his father, and his grandfather had never known or even considered earthquakes in the High Atlas. These communities, like we would be in the UK, were completely unprepared for dealing with an earthquake of this magnitude.

For those of you following the news and feeling compelled to make a difference, I can attest, from personal experience, to the immeasurable value of supporting the Red Cross appeal. The task ahead, encompassing the evacuation of casualties, restoration of access, and the revival of power, water, and communication networks, is a monumental and complex undertaking. Moreover, the long road to rebuilding shattered lives and communities looms large.

Thankfully, my family and the group we travelled with have all made it home. Our thoughts are now with all those still in Morocco – particularly with the incredible people we met, who are facing immense challenges and uncertainty. I feel very fortunate not to have been closer to the epicentre. There, the destruction is unimaginable.

Join us in extending a helping hand to those in need by contributing to the Red Cross appeal for Morocco's earthquake victims. Your support can make a world of difference. Please click here to donate:

<https://donate.redcross.org.uk/appeal/morocco-earthquake-appeal>



UKMT Mathematics Summer School experience



The United Kingdom Mathematics Trust (UKMT) is a charity aiming to advance the education of young people in Mathematics. They run the Junior (Year 7-8), Intermediate (Year 9-11), and Senior (Year 12-13) Maths Challenges, which have over 700,000 entries every year. Every student in Years 7 to 10 at Reading School participates in the relevant challenges. Nationally a total of 1500 of the highest performers in the Intermediate challenge are invited to take part in the Cayley, Hamilton or Maclaurin Olympiad depending on their school year.

The UKMT also runs the annual National Mathematics Summer Schools (NMSS), in which some of the mathematicians participating in the Hamilton and Maclaurian Olympiad from across the country get a chance to attend a week-long residential course. This course aims to promote mathematical thinking and provides the participants with an opportunity to meet other students and adults who enjoy Mathematics. Rukul N (11S) was one of the 36 students invited nationally to this year's NMSS in Leeds, which ran from 30 July to 4 August. Rujul shared:

“Over the course of a week, we stayed at Woodhouse Grove School and attended a huge variety of sessions, including “Proof by Induction”, “Repetition and Chaos”, and “Graph Theory”, in which we went beyond what is taught in GCSE Maths by Maths lecturers from top universities such as Oxford and Cambridge. I found these sessions very interesting, and I have learned a lot from them. As well as the Maths, we also did many fun activities, including going bowling, and watching a film. We also had a talent show. It was a really unique and enriching experience, and I would encourage others to take this opportunity if they are invited.”

Official information from the UKMT can be found by [clicking here](#) and thank you to Rujul for sharing his experience during the summer.

Year 10 Tutor Group Photos

Last term's year 10 parents interested in purchasing a formal photo of their child with their tutor are asked to please get in touch with parent Mrs Kerry O'Brien by emailing kerryobrien2004@yahoo.co.uk. Photos are available for £7 for a 6" x 8" print or £15 for A4. Both in matt finish with all funds raised going back to the School for the benefit of the boys.

We would like to thank Mrs K O'Brien for supporting the school through her fundraising efforts which arose through wanting to provide parents a lasting memory between the official school Year 7 and Sixth Form photographs.

RSPA

What we do

The Reading School Parents' Association (RSPA) provides funds and support for various School projects and initiatives. We raise money through events, Membership Subscription and other fundraising initiatives, to enable the school to pay for equipment and sponsor events outside the normal school budget which will enrich the life of our pupils.

Last year, we raised funds through a Year 7 school disco event, cake sales, Just Giving Page, RSPA lottery, Bags2School collection and nearly new Uniform shop and hoodies, parental corporate matching and ongoing online fundraising platforms such as Giving Machine and Easy Fundraising.

In addition, the RSPA continued the highly successful Christmas Amazon Wishlist where we invited every department to create a Wishlist, which parents donated to - either buying specific items or vouchers. We had wonderful feedback from departments who received their items, directly and positively impacting our student's learning.

Last year also saw the return of the RSPA Summer Fayre. It was a wonderful event bringing the School community together. The students were able to provide charity stalls and the RSPA invited the new incoming Year 7 families to welcome them to our School. We also sponsored and served drinks at a number of school events, including the Leavers BBQ & Senior Prize Giving ceremony, as well as the annual Sports Personality of the Year event.

In the last few years, the raised funds have enabled the purchase of gym equipment, Christmas tree and decorations and the refurbishment of the 6th form common room. Our current fundraising target is to support the purchase of outdoor seating in various locations on the school estate. This will significantly enhance the experience of students and the wider school community during outdoor events.

For all of this, we rely on donations and the support of our volunteer committee members. If you would like to get in touch with our friendly RSPA group, please do not hesitate to email contactus@readingschoolparents.co.uk. Alternatively, you can join our organisation by [clicking this link](#).

Second-hand Uniform Shop

We are now happy to share the 2023 dates for second-hand uniform shop. The shop will be open as follows:

- **Friday 13 October 3.30pm to 4.30pm**
 - **Saturday 14 October 10.30am to 12.30pm**
- and
- **Friday 8 December 3.30pm to 4.30pm**
 - **Saturday 9 December 10.30 to 12.30pm**

Please come along to purchase blazers, trousers, shirts, base layers, rugby boots, trainers, outdoor coats and more.

Where to find us? The shop is located at the back of the walled car-park (opposite the Chapel).

Please note:

- On Friday's buyers are not allowed to drive onto site, access is via the pedestrian gates only.
- On Saturday's buyers are allowed to drive onto site and parking is available on the right-hand side of the walled car-park or outside it.

Please email shop@readingschoolparents.co.uk for further information. We look forward to seeing you there.

Hoodie Ordering

It is still not too late to order the very popular Reading School hoodie! You can order a hoodie by [clicking this link](#).

School Lottery

Joining the lottery is very easy and one RSPA participant wins a guaranteed prize every Saturday night. Tickets cost £1 each and can be bought as a one-off or on a regular basis. [Click this link to join](#).

Should you have any questions about the lottery, please don't hesitate to contact JDas@readingschoolparents.co.uk

We would like to wish everyone a wonderful weekend!

The RSPA Team

Michaelmas Term – Week 2

To keep up to date with student life at Reading School, click the icons below to follow and stay connected



Year 11s prepare for a new Reading School Rugby Season with Teacher of Sports & PE, Mr J Tett









Year 7 and 8 Chess Elective led by Headmaster, Mr A Robson alongside Teacher of Mathematics, Ms K Avedisian.

'Life is very much about making the best decisions you can. So I think chess is very valuable.'
H Nakamura





Some wonderful teaching moments being shared by Teacher of Spanish & Drama, Ms J Kiszka and Year 7s as class and teacher get to know one another. At the end of the class, they were asked to nominate a peer who had shown great behaviour and who had contributed in a positive way during the lesson.





New Year 7 Boarding students integrating into the school and boarding life.
Photo credits: Mme E Fondu (Deputy Housemistress) and Miss A Stratford (Deputy Housemistress)







Feedback is important to us and if you have any comments or suggestions, please contact the Community Relations Office by emailing communityrelations@reading-school.co.uk