



Headmaster's Weekly Bulletin

23 JUNE 2023



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Introduction

I would like to thank every member of the Reading School community for striving to make our school a positive place to live, to study and to work. Students, we will all be aware that at the end of an academic year, physical and emotional reservoirs can sometimes feel emptier than we would like. This is why it is especially important for you to sustain high standards of behaviour, wellbeing, demonstrating for support each other and to work together as effectively as possible.

I could not be prouder of all that our staff do to maximise the opportunities for our students – whether academic, personal, social or cultural. Last week at the Grammar School Heads Association Annual conference, Schools Minister, The Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP, stated “*Reading School is a beacon of excellence.*” Building sustainable excellence is only possible through the professionalism and commitment of staff to our ethos of both academic excellence and character excellence.

All our staff should therefore be very proud of their own part in this moment of recognition, especially as this week marked the National Thank a Teacher on Wednesday, 21 June.

I would urge parents and students to ensure high levels of attendance for the rest of the term. Requests for holidays will not be authorised.

As we approach the end of term, there is much to celebrate, for instance:

- On Wednesday, 21 June and Thursday, 22 June, we welcomed new Year 7 parents and students to the school. They were joyous occasions, full of positive energy and expectations.
- Today, on Friday, 23 June, we will celebrate Sports Day at Palmer Park Stadium where we will see lots of evidence of competition and collaboration.
- We will celebrate this year’s achievements in the Senior Prize Giving Ceremony on Friday, 30 June.
- In addition, we will celebrate more students’ achievements during the Junior Prize Giving Ceremony on Thursday 13 July.
- We are looking forward with anticipation to welcoming grandparents and relatives of our Year 7 students on Tuesday, 4 July.
- We will witness Year 8 at work on a charity challenge throughout July, in part to support our Schools of Sanctuary initiative, following the very successful Refugee Week Art Exhibition on Tuesday, 20 June.
- This week we have welcomed visitors from four different schools and hosted Dr Phil Cummins from School for Tomorrow, helping us sustain and outward looking approach to school life.
- We also have UCAS days, Year 12 induction days, a Year 10 Geography field work trip, French and Spanish plays, the Scottish Play, summer concerts, sports awards ceremonies, House Art and a week of House Cricket ahead.

Our core, our heart and our essence is a commitment to providing opportunities for people to flourish. Clearly, our calendar suggests that in the weeks ahead there is a great deal going on in school to support this goal. With our shared purpose in mind, I would particularly like to thank:

- All our students for their commitment to academic and character excellence throughout the academic year. Thank you for your commitment, especially during the Internal Examination period and the GCSE and A Level external examinations cycle.
- All our parents for their engagement with the Reading School community, through the work of the RSPA and attendance at school events.
- All governors for their strategic oversight and engagement ensuring that school leaders and managers are both challenged and supported.
- All of our teachers who show such commitment and professionalism in their marking and report writing. Quality reporting is formative for students and provides real opportunity for reflection and growth. Thank you for approaching this crucial task so diligently
- All of our Heads of Departments for working alongside our Timetable Manager, Mr S Pedlow, to ensure that we have an outstanding timetable drafted for 2023-2024, which will enable our inspirational curriculum to be implemented effectively.
- All of our Boarding staff, along with pastoral staff in the Day school who strive to lead through service and thereby enable our students to thrive.
- Our Examination and Student Support teams who have navigated exceptionally complex circumstances to provide for the needs of our Year 11 and 13 students this term.
- Our associate staff who continue to shape our culture, and who are role models and ambassadors for Reading School.

A can-do approach ensures maximum opportunities for all members of the Reading School community to flourish with compassion. Boarding and Day School Ofsted inspections remain distinct possibilities up to, and including, the last week of this term and in some ways, I would be delighted for us to receive these visitors. There is so much excellence, ambition and opportunity to evidence this term, and there is a great deal of best practice in our community that we should be truly proud of. If parents wish to evidence their commitment and support for Reading School, please complete the [Parent View](#).

We look forward to providing summaries of the Annual Operational Plan 2023-2024, once it has been approved by the Governing Body in July. It is important that there is a shared understanding of our operational priorities, shaped by our purpose and values.

Mr A M Robson
Headmaster



Key information

All years

International Trips 2023/2024

Having relaunched a wide range of international trips this year, we are pleased to confirm the full program planned for 2023-24. Many of these have been previously advertised and these are in addition to trips that have already been planned and paid for.

We are delighted to be launching our first music tour for a number of years, in addition to a range of exciting European trips supporting our expansive program of linguistics: there are trips and exchanges for students of Spanish, French and German and we anticipate replicating this program annually.

You will also see a tranche of trips for Year 12 students who have missed many of the opportunities over the past few years. In addition, we have expanded our program of character-focussed trips to Finland with opportunities for all-year groups, and new cross-country skiing and wilderness adventures planned in collaboration with our partner in Finland.

Please note that expressions of interest are being taken this term in order to try and keep trip costs down in anticipation of ongoing inflationary pressures.

For the following trips planned for November, we are seeking small deposits at the end of the term in order to be able to book flights as soon as possible and reduce the cost to participants.

- French chateau - Year 8 and 11
- Finland Wilderness Expedition - Year 9 and 10
- Chapel Choir Trip - All Years
- Spanish Barcelona Trip - Year 9/12

In order to assist with trip planning, please do look at the list of visits below and complete the attached expression of interest form no later than **Friday, 30 June 2023**.

Please note we hope that all students in Years 8 and 10 will take part in Belonging Week 1 and associated trips from 20 - 24th May 2024 and all students in Year 7, 9 and 12 will take part in Belonging Week 2 and associated trips from 3-7th June 2024 as they have done this and as part of their contribution to the school community.

To express your interest in any of the featured trips, please click the following link

<https://forms.office.com/e/JW2n9JT5Hw>

| Year Group (from September 2023) | Trip | Approximate Trip Cost | Deposit date | Trip Letter/Information Link |
|----------------------------------|---|-----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Year 8 | German Mosel Valley Jul '24 | £700.00 | 9 th Sept 23 | Link |
| Year 8 | France Chateau Nov '23 | £491.00 | 14 th July 23 | Link |
| Year 8 | Finland Arctic Adventure Jan/Feb '24 | £1400.00 | 9 th Sept 23 | Link |
| Year 9 | Finland Wilderness Expedition Oct/Nov '23 | £1400 | 14 th July 23 | Link |
| Year 9 | Spanish Trip to Barcelona Oct/Nov '23 | £885.00 | 14 th July 23 | Link |
| Year 10 | German Exchange Oct '23 | £545 | Deposits taken | n/a |

| | | | | |
|----------------|---|---------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Year 10 | Spanish Exchange Jan '24 | £700.00 | 9 th Sept 23 | Link |
| Year 10 | Finland Wilderness Expedition Oct/Nov '23 | £1400 | 14 th July 23 | Link |
| Year 10 | Chapel Choir Trip to Barcelona Oct/Nov '23 | £885.00 | 14 th July 23 | Link |
| Year 10 | Finland Cross Country Skiing Expedition early March '24 | £1700 | 9 th Sept 23 | Link |
| Year 10 | France Exchange March '24 | £300.00 | 9 th Sept 23 | Link |
| Year 11 | France Chateau Nov '23 | £491.00 | 14 th July 23 | Link |
| Year 11 | North Wales 5 day Rock Climbing Nov '23 | £550 | 9 th Sept 23 | tbc |
| Year 11 | Finland Canoeing Jul '24 | £1600 | 9 th Sept 23 | Link |
| Year 11 | Chapel Choir Trip to Barcelona Oct/Nov '23 | £885.00 | 14 th July 23 | Link |
| Year 11 | Finland Cross Country Skiing Expedition early March '24 | £1700 | 9 th Sept 23 | Link |
| Year 12 | North Wales 5 day Rock Climbing Nov '23 | £550 | 9 th Sept 23 | Tbc |
| Year 12 | German Exchange Oct '23 | £545 | Deposit taken | n/a |
| Year 12 | French Exchange March '24 | £TBC | 9 th Sept 23 | Link |
| Year 12 | CERN Nov '23 | £650 | 14 th July 23 | Link |
| Year 12 | Finland Canoeing Jul '24 | £1600 | 9 th Sept 23 | Link |
| Year 12 | Spanish Exchange | £700.00 | 9 th Sept 23 | Link |
| Year 12 | Chapel Choir Trip to Barcelona Oct/Nov '23 | £885.00 | 14 th July 23 | Link |
| Year 12 | Spanish Trip to Barcelona Oct/Nov '23 | £885.00 | 14 th July 23 | Link |
| Year 13 | Spanish Exchange | £700.00 | 9 th Sept 23 | Link |

Safeguarding

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service have created guidance for all schools in relation to remaining safe around open waterways during the summer.

Did you know?

- More than 300 people accidentally drown in the UK and Ireland every year.
- Inland waterways, such as rivers, lakes and canals, are where most drownings happen.
- Alcohol and drugs are a factor in almost one-third of all UK accidental drownings.
- Anything below 15°C is defined as cold water. Average UK sea temperatures are just 12°C. Rivers and canals can be colder.



For further advice and guidance about staying safe around open water, please [click here](#).

Associate Staff Vacancies

Site Controller

We're looking for a reliable and enthusiastic Site Controller to contribute to the safety, security and day-to-day maintenance of the school premises and site.

Click [here](#) for more information.

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 Science

This was our second year of entry into the National Scientific Thinking Challenge which is a nationwide challenge for Year 10 students consisting of questions that test the skills used by a research scientist, such as: deduction, spotting trends and anomalies, reading data tables and interpreting graphs. This year, we entered the entirety of our Year 10 cohort but around 17,000 students nationally have also taken part in this challenge this year.

Students from all schools will have their answers marked and ranked, with the top 10%, 25% and 40% of all students nationally who completed this challenge being awarded with a gold, silver and bronze award respectively.

Well done to our year 10 cohort this year as *71 students achieved Gold.*



Excellence in Leadership & Partnerships



Reading School has rapidly developed partnerships with neighbouring Girls' Schools which includes The Abbey and Kendrick School. During May 2023, Prefect Teams from Reading School and The Abbey School met to start making their visions for a stronger partnership a reality. Student leadership on this venture was incredibly important in order to deliver events and opportunities that would be of value to respective students. One of the first collaborations came with a joint charity Year 12 quiz night which took place at Reading School on Tuesday, 20 June.

Harry A (12S) shared on behalf of the Captaincy Team:

“On Tuesday night, Year 12 students from The Abbey School and Reading School were invited to take part in a

quiz night in the refectory. The event was organised by the student leadership teams from both schools and was joint presented by our School Captain (Josh) and Erin, one of the Abbey's Head Girls. The event was a huge success and was a great opportunity for students from both schools to meet and socialise. Ending with a close race for first place and a valiant effort from the staff table, we hope that this event will mark the beginning of a series of collusive events between both schools and serves to demonstrate the potential behind these events.”

Belonging & Community

25 Years of Service to Reading School

What are your earliest memories when you first started in your role as Boarding House Matron?

How much fun it was and still is! The boys were hard working, but a lot of fun. And they were very polite, very courteous. They were also quite protective. When I got here, this was the first school I'd worked in and boarding was very odd to me, having not worked in a boarding environment. I came from a hospital environment as nursing staff and I didn't think I'd be here for 25 years.

What does the role of Matron look like?

Absolutely not what people think? It's varied and different every day. I can be unblocking sinks one day and wiping someone's tears on another. I never know what I'm coming into but by the end of a day, I'm can think, '*where's the time gone?*'

What's kept you in the role for 25 years?

Caring about the boys. I always said once I stopped caring about the boys it's time to go but at the moment, I still care, which I think keeps me going.

What's been one of your highlights?

Having the opportunity to go to Kenya with the school, to see Sure24, which was definitely a highlight. And there's been a few boys' weddings I've been invited to...and seeing the old boys come back to visit.

Is there any Boarder that you remember more than others and why?

Yes, there is one. HM had a difficult upbringing and he came to Boarding which acted as his second family. He really thrived and succeeded. He now happily lives in New Zealand and has a family of his own and I went to his wedding. He shared he got a lot out of boarding and that it contributed to who he had become as a man. I'm happy we made a positive difference in his life.

If you had to give your successor advice, what would it be?

To simply be kind, compassionate, consistent and caring.



Summer Fayre 2023



The countdown to our Summer Fayre has begun...Only 15 days to go!

The Summer Fayre is going to be huge fun with the following confirmed attractions:

- Motorbikes- Courtesy of Marshall Honda
- Inflatables Bungee run
- Nerf Gun shooting range
- Beat the Goalie
- Crush the Cricketer - with our special guest Mr Allen
- Ice cream Van, Burger and Hot dogs, Donuts
- Drinks Stalls
- Music
- Professional stall holders in the Refectory...and plenty more fun for the whole family!

This year's event is being held to raise money for outdoor seating for the students and also as a gentle reminder that we are not just a family within the school but also in the wider community. We hope to see lots of new and prospective families alongside local residents!

We are *so grateful* for the support that's already been received so far so keep it coming, we still need volunteers, bakers and donations.

Really looking forward to seeing everyone there! If there are any questions, please email the RSPA at contactus@readingschoolparents.co.uk

2nd Hand Uniform Sale

The Uniform Shop needs donations of the following for the Y7 induction day on 12th July. We are in particular looking for donations of the following items:

- Blazers (especially up to 34" chest)
- Shirts (long and short sleeves)
- Trousers
- Ties
- Macron kit

Donations can be handed into Reception at any time - marked RSPA Uniform Shop or handed in at the Summer Fayre on 9th July.

We would like to wish everyone a wonderful weekend!

The RSPA Team

Summer Term – Week 10

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



House Squash Competition 2023, Friday, 16 June

In 5th place, with 2 wins, Laud house

In 4th place, with 11 wins, East house



In 3rd place, with 11 wins, West house (beat East on head-to-head)

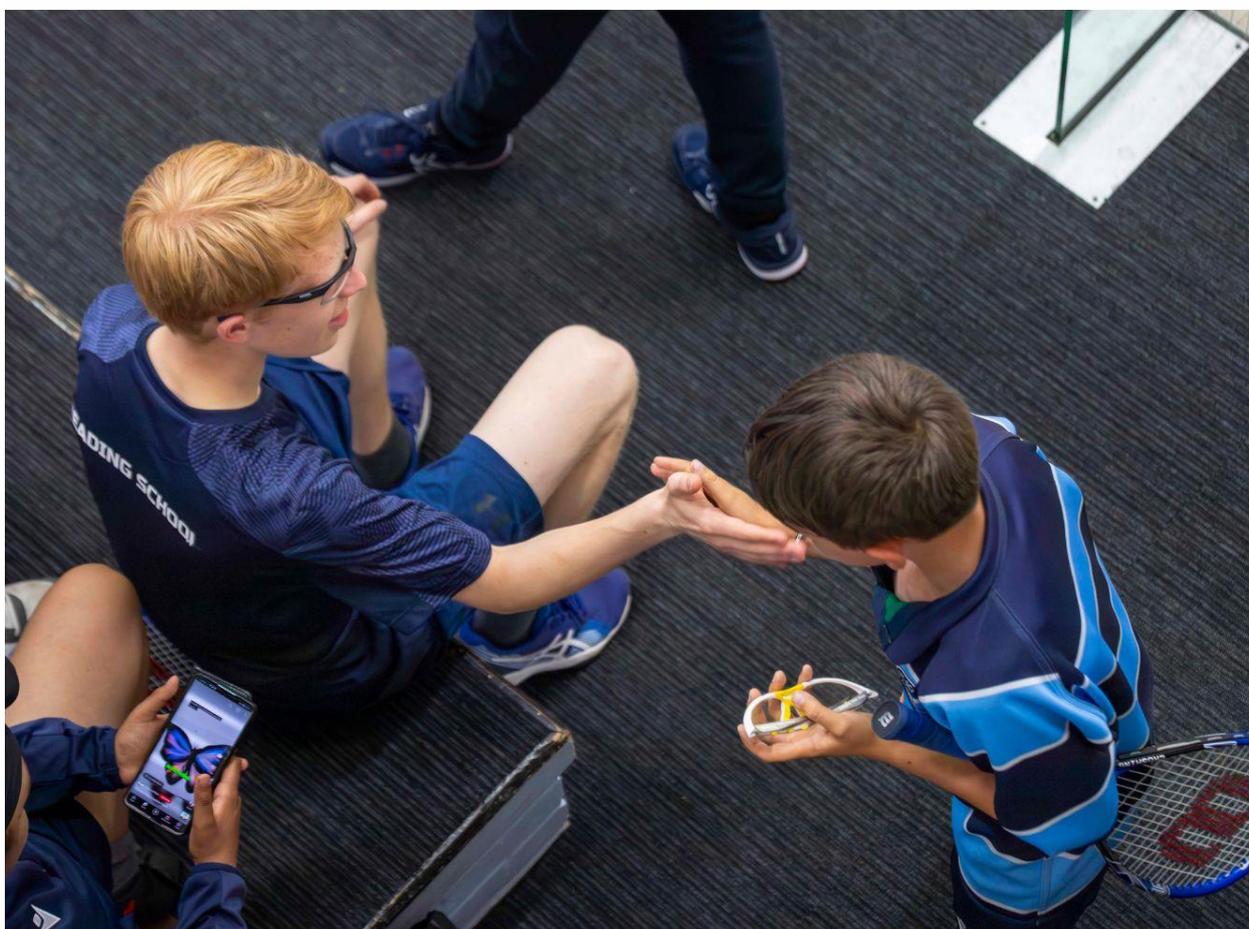
In 2nd place, with 13 wins, County house



In 1st place, with 13 wins, School house (beat County on head-to-head)



Particular congratulations also go to Dan S (11E), Teo R (11E), Tristan S (10W), Prayrit A (9S) and Hashem A (9S) for winning their individual brackets, including clean sweeps for Dan, Teo, Prayrit and Hashem.





“House Squash was a great opportunity to see friends from the Squash club from across year groups compete and see which house has the greatest Squash player capital. Despite the range of skill levels, the competition was fair and enjoyable for everyone involved and offered some nail bitingly close match ups that were incredibly entertaining to watch! Thank you everyone for the great event!” Prabhav B



Year 12 Quiz Night

















Reading School vs Marylebone Cricket Club









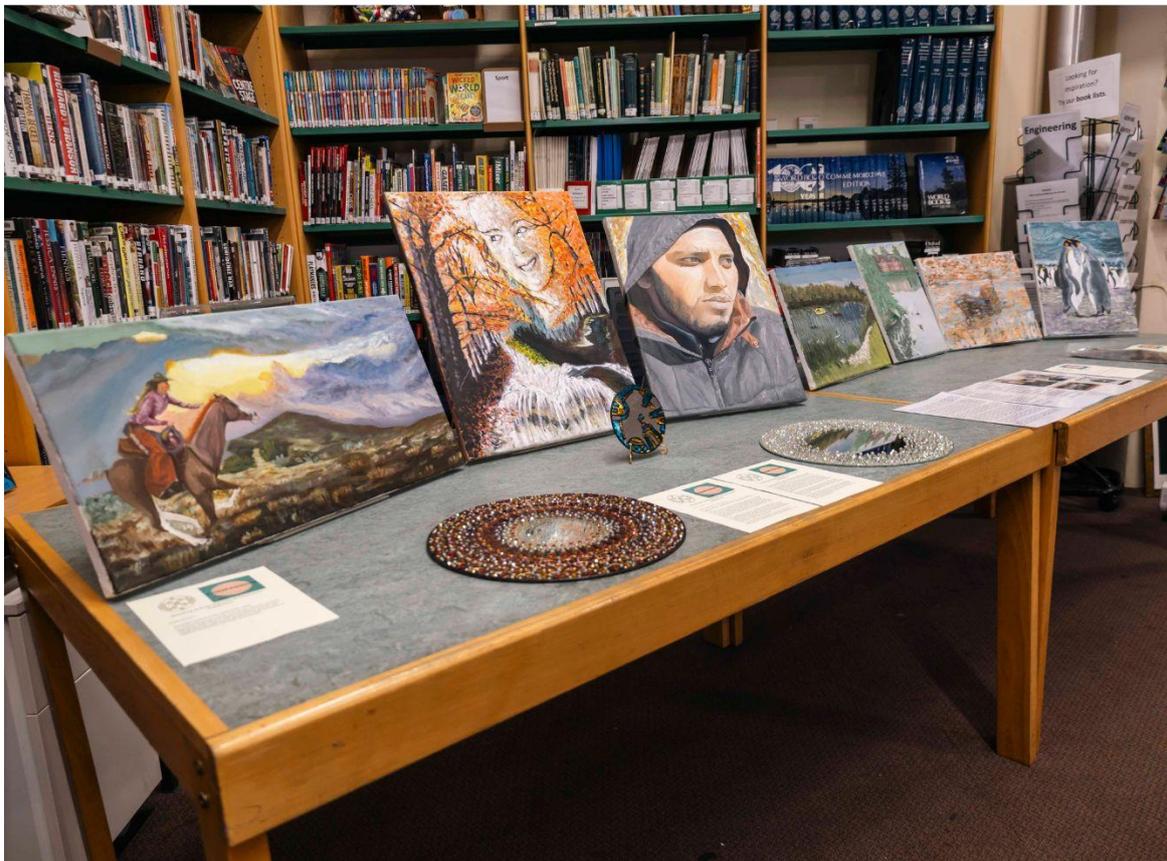




Reading School Art Exhibition - Refugee Week 2023

We thank all our exhibitors, student ambassador team, parents, students, catering team and all others who support our School of Sanctuary related work.

For enquiries about our work for children seeking refuge, please email Mr Luteijn kluteijn@reading-school.co.uk









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