



Headmaster's Weekly Bulletin

19 APRIL 2024

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Introduction

Dear Colleagues, Carers, Students and Parents,

Before the Easter holidays, Mr Robson described this time of year as “the business end of the season.” Indeed, for our Year 11 and 13 students, this time of year may start to feel like the ‘beginning of the end’. Most courses have moved into a phase of revision, students are given exam briefings to prepare them for their external assessments, and Modern Foreign Language speaking exams begin in earnest. Next week, House Captains will discover the results of the House Championship and the week after, school prefects will pass the baton onto to a new cohort of leaders.

For the 340 of our students in Year 11 and 13, the summer term is undoubtedly a significant period of transition. These students will sit more than 5000 external examination papers across 150 qualifications, with around 2100 A Level and GCSE exam entries in total. This process can be fraught with fear and apprehension, but it need not be, and I am eager to remind the whole community that this can be an incredibly exciting time.

Every Reading School student is a bundle of creativity and talent. Our teachers are passionate experts. Together, we are thoughtful, curious and diligent, and we ought to see exams as an opportunity to show the depth of our journey together, the breadth of our exploration and the accumulation of our understanding. Tests and assessments should not be seen as threatening clouds on the horizon, but as exciting thresholds into the future. They are not the purpose of our learning, nor even the best measure of our education. The purpose of our reading, writing and discussion is always to ready us for society, and the reason we sit assessments is to prove ourselves prepared for what comes next. I therefore invite all of our students to use the term ahead as a beginning and not an end at all.

The term ahead is a great chance for all of us to reflect on what we have discovered through the dark days of the winter. It can be an opportunity to reflect on what knowledge has ‘stuck’ and what has been forgotten. Ahead of us lies a gauge of our future direction and the chance to use what we have learned to ‘feedforward’, helping shape our future positively, purposefully and astutely. The summer can be a springboard. A stepping stone. A launch.

T.S. Eliot wrote: “To make an end is to make a beginning. The end is where to start from.”

In this spirit, I would like to encourage all our students to embrace the adventures, and the assessments that lie ahead without trepidation. Our goal is not to achieve a perfect end to the year, but to create a stress-free beginning of the ‘what next’. Equally, I also encourage all parents of students in Years 7-10 and 12 to pay close attention to the subject-specific revision guidance collated by Mr Fairchild, and to use these guides to reduce anxiety and stress.

My hope is that this term will be characterised by a rebuttal of unhealthy pressure, by balanced reactions to expectations, and by positive responses to adversity. It is surely not too high a bar to hope for a summer in which we are happy as well as tested, and safe as well as challenged. If, to appropriate Winston Churchill’s words, “Now is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But is, perhaps, the end of the beginning.” May the summer term be a good beginning for all that lies ahead.

With best wishes,

Chris Evans

Headmaster

Key information

All years

Exams – a reminder

Students and parents can find all subject-specific year group information regarding the internal exams here: [Reading School - Internal Exams](#). We would like to remind all students, parents and carers that these exams are not a reason to become anxious, but instead to celebrate, practice and improve.

The specifics of the exam schedule will be released in due course, but a reminder that for Years 7, 9 and 12, these will take place w/c 20th May, and for Years 8 and 10, exams will take place w/c 3rd June, with those groups having their Belonging Week activities in the alternate week.

All students and parents can find the [School's official revision guide by clicking here](#) and the parent-facing webinar here can be [viewed by clicking here](#).

Three pairs of Year 12 students delivered a short presentation of their personal revision and exam tips to each of the Year 11 tutor groups, and credit must go to them for their professionalism and useful advice. They will be doing similar for Year 10s shortly, and then selected Year 10 students will be running similar sessions for tutor groups across Years 7 - 9. We are very proud of our students who act as role models for others.

A selected group of Year 11 students also benefited from a revision session from Elevate Education before Easter which was highly successful and provided lots of motivation and confidence ahead of their GCSEs.

We would like to thank Mrs Majorossy-Young for leading this enhanced revision preparation.

Year 11 only

Exam Briefing

All Year 11s have now been emailed their exam timetable, which includes the venues for their exams, and updated timings if they have any exam clashes. They have had an exam briefing today on Friday 19 April and please [click this link](#) in order to access the information they need to know.

Safeguarding

Support for parents

Our ongoing commitment to the safety and wellbeing of our students means we regularly feature safeguarding advice and guidance for parents and students. We believe that safeguarding is a collective responsibility involving not only our staff and students, but also our valued parents and carers. Examples of empowering you with the knowledge and resources needed to play an informed and active role in safeguarding includes featuring our monthly online safety guide.

With this in mind, we would encourage all parents to browse or bookmark the [NSPCC 'Support for Parents' page](#) which includes diverse information including:

- Talking about difficult topics
- Separation and divorce

- Healthy relationships
- Talking to children about race and racism
- Dealing with bullying
- Parental mental health
- Supporting a child experiencing anxiety
- Recognising signs of self-harm

By working together, we can create a safe and nurturing environment where every student can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

Current Vacancies

We do not currently have any vacancies available at Reading School. Please [visit our careers page](#) to join our talent pool and where your application will be reviewed.

School Community News

Sanctuary Fundraising Event



The Refugee Support Group, who Reading School has previously worked alongside, is celebrating 30 years of providing support for children and families seeking sanctuary next Friday 26 April from 7pm – 9pm at the Concert Hall, Reading Town Hall, Blagrove Street, Reading, RG1 1QH.

The evening will feature special guest Lord Alf Dubs, and BBC Radio 3's Fiona Talkington, who will be in conversation with refugees from Reading and Berkshire. Live music will be provided by [Limpopo Groove](#) and theatre from [Rank & File](#). Tickets for the event can be found on What's On Reading by [following this link](#).

During 2023, Reading School became [the very first School of Sanctuary in Reading](#) and joined a network of more than 680 primary and secondary schools all committed to creating a culture of welcome, understanding and belonging for children and families forced to flee their homes and countries of origin.

RSPA

The RSPA team welcomes all students back to school after the Easter Break as we hope you all have enjoyed some of your time. This week we are back with our Pre-loved Uniform shop and donations:

Pre-loved Uniform Shop

The volunteers at the Pre-loved Uniform Shop are busy preparing for for new Y7s who will be joining Reading School.

We would welcome any donations of the following clothing and items:

- Blazers (in small)
- Shirts, up to age 13
- House ties
- Any Macron kit
- Grey or blue v-neck jumpers
- Lab coats and goggles

Please send donations in to school reception in a bag marked "Uniform Shop Donations".

Please email shop@readingschoolparents.co.uk with any queries.

We wish you a lovely weekend.

The RSPA Team

Summer Term – Week 1

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



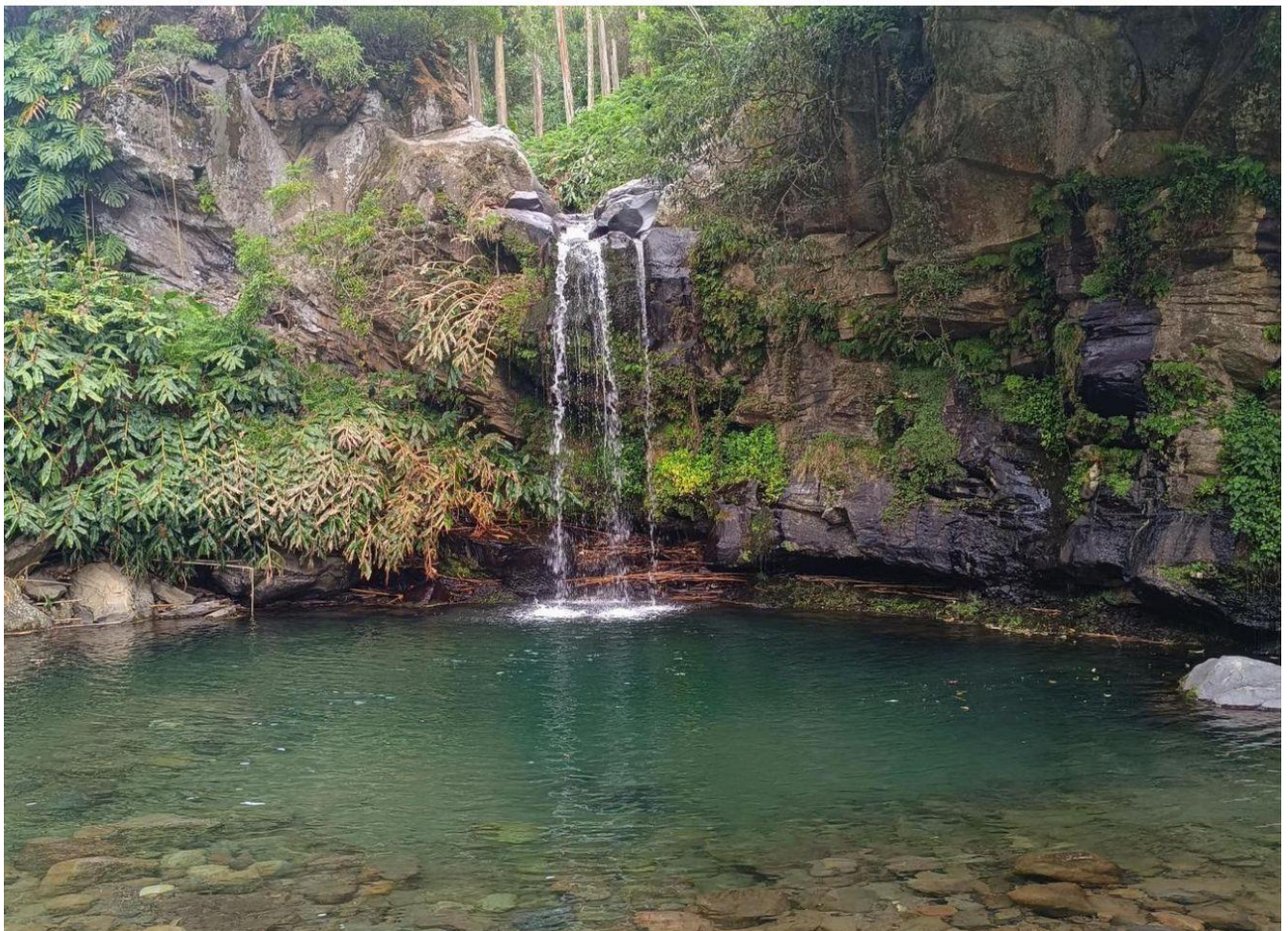
Azores Trip 2024

Years 10 and 12 were led by the Geography Department (Dr Young, Mr Ginger and Mr Luteijn) on an exciting and enriching trip to Azores, an archipelago composed of nine volcanic islands in the Macaronesia region of the North Atlantic Ocean about 870 miles west of Lisbon, Portugal.

Student photo submissions from Yicheng S (10S), Keshanth R (12AC) and Charlie H (12ZMC)











Geographical Innovation Challenge 2024

A challenge between 4 teams from Reading and Kendrick School who competed this week to present their ideas and solutions of how to tackle the real-world issue of microplastics and the harm they can cause in the environment.



Each team got to present their innovative designs aimed to reduce microplastics at source, or by removing them from the environment.



All teams demonstrated an understanding of the source of microplastics and how they find their way into the environment as well as their solutions which included justifications of funding, scalability, potential future modifications, stakeholder interests and awareness of the limitations of their solution.



All presentations were judged by a panel of judges and well done to the winning team from Kendrick School with their novel solution of using jellyfish mucus which acts like net to trap microplastics.



German Exchange 2024

We welcomed exchange students from Germany this week who will be staying with host families.



Exchange trips allow students from respective countries to experience culture and language with friendships being formed that last long after an exchange trip finishes.



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