



Robert Smyth Academy

Dear Families and Students,

Firstly, I hope that the students involved in the Modern Foreign Language Residential Visits to both Barcelona and Cologne will have had an amazing and memorable week. I am sure that parents will be delighted to hear all about the cultural experiences that the students had because of these visits. Equally, we hope that Year 10 students who participated in Work Experience Week will have had a valuable time, and we will debrief this experience in the forthcoming week. This has been an amazing week, thanks to all the staff involved.

Staffing updates

Firstly, I would like to pay tribute to the hard work of **Mr Sullivan (Head of Business and Economics)** who will be retiring at the end of the academic year having offered an incredible 30 years of service. Mr Sullivan has been a faithful servant to the school and many students will have benefited from his boundless enthusiasm in lessons for which he is well known. I am sure that students and parents will wish to extend their thanks in the final week of term and send Mr Sullivan their best wishes. We look forward to staying in touch in the future and we are grateful that Mr Sullivan has expressed a willingness to continue his relationship with the school on a supply basis, as part of his new life beyond full-time teaching.

I would also like to thank **Mr Mundy (Teacher of Science)** and **Mr Sheehan (Teacher of Computer Science)** for their service to the school. Both colleagues will embark on new adventures over the summer months with Mr Mundy accepting an exciting new role in China and Mr Sheehan moving back to teach in the Republic of Ireland. We have been very fortunate to work with both colleagues who have been fantastic teachers and I know that students will be sorry to see them leave. We wish them the very best of luck on their respective adventures and we hope that they get in touch to share their experiences in the future.

Finally, I must take this opportunity to wish Mrs Fenton (Head of Year 13 & Teacher of Drama) our very best wishes as a staff team as she begins maternity leave this week. Mrs Fenton has continued to teach outstanding lessons and give fantastic support throughout this year and we look forward to keeping in touch with her over the coming special weeks and months ahead. We are delighted that **Mrs Colman** will provide full-time leadership as **Head of Year 12** in the new academic year, in Mrs Fenton's absence.

I would like to thank all colleagues for their hard work and I am sure that you will join with me in wishing them well in their future endeavours.

New appointments

The school has invested significant time and resources to fulfil an ambitious recruitment plan and I am delighted to be able to share this with you. We have appointed the following colleagues on a **permanent basis**:

- **Miss Woodford** has been appointed as **Teacher of Business and Economics**
- **Mr Adams** has been appointed as **Teacher of Science**
- **Miss Jones** has been appointed as **Teacher of Computer Science**
- **Mrs Pearson** has been appointed as **Teacher of Mathematics**
- **Mr Dodhia** has been appointed as **Teacher of Geography**
- **Mrs Lad** has been appointed as **Subject Lead of Food and Nutrition**



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We are also delighted to have recruited a strong team of specialist teachers to join our team on a permanent basis at the beginning of the academic year.

We have also invested in **additional teachers** who will undertake a **fixed term contract** during the forthcoming academic year to further support the effective delivery of the curriculum:

- **Mr Bailey** has been appointed as **Teacher of Science and Physical Education**
- **Miss Tidley** has been appointed as **Teacher of Music**
- **Mr Collier** has been appointed as **Teacher of English**
- **Mr Gowler** has been appointed as **Teacher of Mathematics**

We have also reinvested in our pastoral support systems again this year, so this remains a strength of the school as we remain committed to sustaining high quality provision in this area:

- We have appointed **Mrs Spencer** as **Academic Mentor**. Mrs Spencer will be working with students in Key Stage 3 who have not yet secured their chronological reading age to promote curriculum access
- We have recruited **Mrs Burris** who begins a new position as **SEND and Safeguarding Administrator**. This reflects our enduring commitment to supporting vulnerable students
- **Mrs Barton** will continue to work as **SEND Manager** during Mrs Finnemore's maternity leave

I am also delighted to confirm the following key appointments to leadership positions within the Academy. My congratulations go to all of the key personnel listed below on their successful promotions:

- **Mr B Markham** has been appointed as **Subject Lead of Business and Economics**
- **Mr J Markham** has been appointed as **Assistant College Leader (Moseley)**
- **Miss Webster** has been appointed as **ECT Induction Coordinator for new teachers**
- **Mr Millar** has been appointed as **Deputy Head of English**

We also congratulate **Mrs Thurlow** who has been successfully appointed as **Head of Science** as Mrs Hancox is due to begin maternity leave in the new academic year. Mrs Thurlow brings excellent curriculum knowledge and fantastic experience to this post and we are grateful that our students will benefit from her wisdom.

New College Leader

Finally, I am delighted to confirm the appointment of **Miss Paterson** to the post of **College Leader (Moseley)** who takes on her post in the new academic year. Miss Paterson was successful at interview in the Spring Term and impressed all members of the panel with her passion for improving student experiences and her strategic thinking. She will be responsible for the experiences of all students in Moseley College, and she will undertake a strategic brief that includes attendance, behaviour, rewards, and recognition.

Miss Paterson said, *"I have always counted myself lucky to be part of an Academy that is, without want of a better word, special. Many things contribute to this, but fundamentally this is attributable to brilliant young people and a staff team that are united in their goal to help them succeed. As leader of Moseley College, I look forward to ensuring that students receive the support and guidance necessary to leave Robert Smyth Academy the best version of themselves that they can possibly be."*



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Robert Smyth Academy

National Recruitment Crisis and Teacher Shortages

Having provided you with an insight into the success that we have had with recruitment, I wanted to make parents aware that even great schools like RSA have found this more challenging this year. There is a shortage of qualified teachers across the country and a declining trend of graduates seeking to begin teacher training. This is happening for a range of [complex reasons](#) but it poses both serious and unprecedented challenges.

We were able to be successful this year because we took a highly proactive approach using conventional recruitment channels but also social media to drive interest in new positions and vacancies. However, the linchpin was the work undertaken by my PA, Mrs Wood. I am deeply grateful to Mrs Wood for leaving no stone left unturned to ensure that we have attracted the most talented individuals who share our values and a commitment to excellence because we know how fundamentally important this is to our students.

Therefore, I am very proud to share the result of months of hard work to ensure that our students benefit from working with the best teachers and support staff at the beginning of the academic year. We are uniquely well placed due to the tenacity shown by everyone involved in our recruitment process.

Behaviour Policy update

We continue to promote the key values of the school; **respect, succeed, aspire**, in all that we do. To this end, we have undertaken a detailed review of the Behaviour Policy to reflect both updated national guidance and our school priorities with the aim of ensuring excellent behaviour from all.

At the start of the new academic year, all students will receive an induction regarding the expectations of the updated Behaviour Policy including any key change during Expectations Assemblies. Families will be able to access the policy via the website from **next Friday**.

We will coordinate bespoke meetings with identified students to explain and discuss any key changes before the end of term, so that there are no alarms and no surprises.

Mentoring (appointment only)

In the new academic year, we will relocate our pastoral mentoring team to a new location in the Physical Education block. This space has been purpose built to accommodate personalised mentoring and small-group intervention work. **Mrs Osborne (Social and Emotional Mental Health Manager)** will be responsible for the management of this working space and we will introduce an appointment system for identified students.

We will continue to invest in the deployment of a Duty Team every day, led by a member of the Senior Leadership Team, who will be able to assist students with non-routine requests for support.

Students will be informed that the **'A3'** class room will revert back to use as a Sixth Form teaching space.

Robert Smyth Academy Redwood: Communication and Interaction Resource Base (CIRB)

Finally, I am delighted to inform families that the capital plan for the delivery of a 15-place facility for neuro-diverse children in South Leicestershire has picked up pace! We are in the process of working with the Local Authority to finalise the key documentation pertaining to admissions for **Robert Smyth Academy Redwood** which will provide an education for children with communication and interaction barriers including autism.

We have now advertised for a **Lead Teacher of SEND** role for the special teacher who can become the star player in this project. We anticipate a great field of applicants to work in a brand-new facility within a fantastic school. If families know someone who would be a great fit then please share this [link](#).

As this provision opens, we anticipate the enrolment of 5 students in January 2024.



Robert Smyth Academy

If you made it this far...

As I bring this lengthy letter to a close, I want to express my gratitude to you for taking the time to read it amidst your other commitments. I know that it isn't easy to keep abreast of all the different information from a school particularly when you have your own work and family priorities to think about. However, it does matter and it does make a difference because together we form a strong partnership in shaping the future of our students, and I am grateful for the support and trust you place in our school community.

Your involvement and active participation make a world of difference, and I am confident that, with your continued support, we will navigate any challenges that come our way. On that note, I would like to add a further note of thanks to the parents (you know who you are!) who have sent such thoughtful and unexpected messages of appreciation over the last fortnight. I have been in post for five years as Principal of Robert Smyth Academy and I can tell you two things of which I am quite certain: the school has never been better, and it will get even better in the future.

Thank you once again for your unwavering support, and I wish you a restful and rejuvenating weekend ahead.

Yours sincerely,

Dan Cleary
Principal

Key dates

- **Monday 3rd July:** Meet the Tutor Evening (Year 6 only)
- **Tuesday 4th July:** Year 6 Induction Day
- **Tuesday 4th July:** Year 10 Careers Day
- **Wednesday 5th July:** Industrial Action Day (Year 10 and 12 in school only)
- **Wednesday 5th July** – Textiles and Art show – Bragg Hall 5pm-7pm
- **Thursday 6th July** – Sports day
- **Friday 7th July:** Industrial Action Day (Year 10 and 12 in school only)
- **Monday 10th July:** KS3 Celebration Evening
- **Friday 7th July** – Year 12 Celebration Assembly
- **Wednesday 12th July:** End of Year Trips / Last Day of Term. **The school closes at 3.15pm.**