



Robert Smyth Academy

Dear Families,

This has been a fairly typical Friday in many ways, the weather was mixed, as one might expect in the British summertime. We welcomed all Year 11 students into school this morning to sit their English Language GCSE along with fifty 6th form students for their Psychology A Level.

This afternoon, it was the turn of GCSE musicians and A Level Further Mathematicians. Galliford Try visited for the final time as part of their two-year mentoring programme for girls in construction, and over 100 students took part in our year 7 College football competition. In addition, more than 150 lessons were taught today, and over 700 meals were served in the canteen.

A very busy Friday, but not that different from any other day in terms of the breadth of opportunity, activity, and high-quality teaching offered to our students. What *was* different, however, is that this marks the end of my first week as Principal.

I joined the school in August 1998, almost 28 years ago, and my journey with Robert Smyth has been a long and rewarding one, filled with experiences and people who have shaped my educational vision.

I am incredibly proud to be part of the Robert Smyth community, and it was a truly special moment to be appointed as Principal. In fact, I was more emotional than I expected. On reflection, though, I should have known that being given the opportunity to serve a school I have loved working in, alongside staff I hold in such high regard and, most importantly, students who are such exceptional young people, would affect me deeply.

I am passionate about doing my very best for this school, this community, and everyone within it. I am equally committed to ensuring that all students benefit fully from the opportunities we provide and are encouraged not to opt out of valuable experiences, even when this means making difficult decisions that may not always be popular. It is my responsibility to act in the best interests of our young people, and with that guiding my decisions, I am confident in the contribution I can make as Principal.

I know you are all aware of what wonderful young people we have at Robert Smyth as they are your children, but this was highlighted for me again on Monday at breaktime. While on duty at the edge of the playground, a student I often exchange greetings with came over to ask if it was my first 'official day in charge'. When I confirmed that it was, she asked how I was feeling.

Teenagers are often unfairly portrayed as insular or disengaged, yet here was a student who chose to spend part of her social time checking in on someone else, recognising that I might be experiencing a mixture of emotions - which I was: both trepidation and excitement. We spoke briefly about what being Principal feels like, and she listened thoughtfully before wishing me well and returning to enjoy the rest of her break with her friends.

It left me reflecting, once again, on what a truly special school I have been given the opportunity and privilege to lead.

Wishing you a happy carnival day, in the hope that it's a dry one.

Yours sincerely,

Miss Nicholson
Principal



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