



Robert Smyth Academy

Dear Families,

Farewell to leaving members of staff

Robert Smyth Academy has a fantastic, longstanding staff team who know the school and students well. We do not take this for granted because this team is comprised of the most important assets we offer as a school, and without them, we could not hope to educate or support our students in the way we do every day.

This year, we express our sincere and heartfelt thanks to Mr. Davies (Teacher of Geography), who concludes his teaching career in a school that he has so brilliantly enriched through his teaching and wider contributions. I was privileged to attend the Sports Awards Evening recently, where Mr. Davies was given an honorary award for his contribution to the PE Faculty. This typifies the great contribution that he has made and the many students he has supported. Mr. Davies will continue to work with the school as our Timetabling Lead, so he will still be in school on occasion, although I am unclear whether he will be tempted to return to the basketball court!

Earlier this term, we welcomed back Mrs. Finnemore (SENCO) and Mrs. Fenton (Co-Head of Year 12 / Head of Drama), and we have been delighted to see Mrs. Hancox (Head of Science) return in recent weeks following maternity leave. We will also welcome back Mrs. Wass (Head of Music) this week and Mrs Ahmed (Teacher of Maths) in the new Academic year. As a result, I wish to offer my sincere thanks to Miss Tidley (Teacher of Music) and Mr. Collier (Teacher of English) for their hard work during this year. In addition, we wish Mr. Gettings (Teacher of MFL) and Miss Snakowska (Teacher of Mathematics) further thanks for their fantastic contributions and hard work as they move on to new opportunities. Finally, a very special and sincere congratulations to Miss Palmer (Learning Support Assistant) who begins Teacher Training in September!

Finally, we wish Miss Pearson (Teacher of Mathematics) a happy and healthy maternity leave over the next year, and we look forward to welcoming her back in 2025.

We have worked tirelessly to ensure that our students continue to benefit from the best teachers and support staff. We have successfully secured a fully staffed team for the forthcoming academic year. Of course, given the national teacher recruitment crisis, we cannot take this for granted. I wish to extend my sincere thanks to Mrs. Wood (PA to the Principal) for her sterling work to ensure that our students can look forward to a new academic year with a high-quality staff team.

Year 12 Enrichment Week

Last week, students in our Sixth Form were provided with great opportunities for learning and reflection in preparation for life beyond the school gates. I am especially grateful to the brilliant Sixth Form Team for their sterling organisation of the events that took place during the week. To this end, we have been grateful to Elena and Maisie (Year 12) for writing a short summary about each experience so that the wider community can see the breadth, variety and quality of these experiences:

Monday - UCAS discovery trip

On Monday, around 100 students from Year 12 went to the UCAS discovery event in Birmingham. There were a huge variety of different universities/colleges/conservatoires. I spoke to lots of different representatives and all the people I met were very friendly and answered all my questions with depth and honesty. Navigating the vast number of different websites online can be quite stressful, but this event was really useful. I think this was a great experience and it was beneficial as it can be hard to travel to all these institutions so having them in one place was perfect. **(Elena, Year 12 student)**



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Tuesday - Safe driving, mental wellbeing and gangs/drug addiction

A super varied number of activities were on offer to us, with tutor groups rotating throughout the day. A presentation delivered from the Leicestershire Fire Department to the whole year group this morning gave us a serious insight into the dangers of reckless driving, and the damage and injury it could cause. This was followed by a series of workshops including an escape room activity, a VR car crash simulator, which really put into context the severity of reckless driving, a reaction times test, and a demonstration of how alcohol affects your reaction times, CPR training, and a display from the Fire Department, showing us how they extract casualties from the site of a car crash.

Moving into the afternoon, mentor and lecturer Paul Hannaford gave us a powerful talk, relaying the events of his life as an ex-drug addict and gang leader, and describing the power which illegal drugs can have, and the ways in which they can seriously ruin lives. With his anecdotes containing: his multiple surgeries because of knife crime and needle abuse; his difficulties with losing family and loved ones due to the power of drugs over his life; and his rehabilitation process, getting him to where he was today. Overall, a day full of very important life lessons and warnings of the dangers of irresponsible driving and drug misuse. **(Maisie, Year 12 student)**

Wednesday - UCAS and Finance

This day was centred around looking to the future, and considering our university applications, our finances, and our potential future careers, in greater detail. Starting off in the morning, with talks delivered by our Sixth Form Leadership staff Mr Luhrs and Mrs Wilson, focused on the UCAS process, what to consider when choosing a university, admissions tests, and how to create a powerful personal statement: all skills which are vital for us to learn and transfer as we move onto the next chapters in life. Following this, a talk held in the main hall by Mel from WizeUp Financial Education gave us some fun and challenging things to think about in terms of finance: how to budget, what you should be prioritising spending on, the pros and cons of credit cards, and more important financial advice and tips, which we can apply to our current lives, and student life at university, where budgeting is of growing importance.

The afternoon sessions were held across the school, and were chosen by us as students, giving us time to sit and talk to an expert in different career paths, including law, finance, and the creative industries. This allowed us to specialise in an area of interest and get to see a real-life example of our opportunities after sixth form. Overall, the day was very insightful in helping with some more of the serious things to consider as we move into university/apprenticeship applications, and future career paths. **(Maisie, Year 12 student)**

Thursday - Faith Forum

I took part in the faith forum in Year 10 but now that I'm older, I took a lot more from it than I did back then. Today we listened to people of six different religions speak about how their religion influences their lives and how important their beliefs are. Humanism, Judaism, Sikhism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam were the six religions that were highlighted today. It was great to have the opportunity to ask questions and see how differently each person answered. I was especially curious about Humanism, and I'd never heard about it until today. Each of the speakers were friendly and happy to answer questions. It was a great experience and I think the next Year 12 students will benefit from it as well. **(Elena, Year 12 student)**



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END-OF-TERM NOTICES

The school will close at 3.15pm on **Wednesday 10th July** for the summer recess.

Please see our [calendar](#) for information regarding arrangements for collection of GCSE and A-Level Results.

- Tuesday 27th August – INSET Day
- Wednesday 28th August – Year 7 start & Year 12 induction
- Thursday 29th August – Years 7, 11 and 13 in school
- Friday 30th August – All year groups in school except for Year 12
- Monday 2nd September – Year 12 lessons commence

>>> See Term Dates (2024/25), as previously communicated, can be found [here](#).

Back to school: Uniform

As a timely reminder before the break, please note that all students will be expected to return in full school uniform and without piercings/infractions that are not acceptable. We would be grateful if parents could remain mindful that **we do not permit the following**, as per the uniform [policy](#):

- Nail polish or false nails
- Unnatural hair dye
- Multiple ear piercings (one single stud in each ear maximum)
- Nose piercings

We will **specifically follow up on these features of our uniform policy** to ensure high standards from all:

- Blazers to be worn in school.
- Grey pleated skirt, regulation length, **on or just above the knee**.

Back to school: Punctuality

Students should be at their Tutor Base by 8.45am, ready for their Form Tutorial session. Students who arrive late will be placed into detention for lateness on the same day.

Where can I access support while the school is closed?

During the summer holidays families can access the following sources of support:

- **Childline:** <https://www.childline.org.uk/> or by calling **0800 1111**
- **Children's Services:** <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/community-safety/>
- **NHS England:** Call **111** or visit <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/>
- **Guidance on coronavirus:** <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>
- **Market Harborough Food Bank:** <https://www.harborough.gov.uk/foodbanks>

Suicide prevention

I want to remind you of the support available via [Papyrus](#); an organisation dedicated to the prevention of young suicide. Suicide is the biggest killer of young people under 35 in the UK and every year thousands more attempt or contemplate suicide, harm themselves or suffer alone, afraid to speak about how they are feeling.

If you are the parent of a young person who experiences thoughts or feelings of this kind, then we would strongly advise that you seek an appointment with your GP and that you access the following support:

If you are having thoughts of suicide or are concerned for a young person who might be you can contact HOPELINEUK for confidential support and practical advice.

Call: 0800 068 4141

Text: 07860 039 967

Email: pat@papyrus-uk.org



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Behaviour Policy updates

We continue to benefit from a calm, positive working environment imbued by great relationships with our students. Next week, I will write to nearly 200 students who have not accrued a single negative behaviour point across Year 7-10 which is a magnificent achievement. As part of our review cycle, we have updated the Behaviour Policy for the forthcoming academic year. Unsurprisingly, this policy is largely unchanged. However, I would draw attention to **two changes** that will take effect at the beginning of the new year to ensure consistently good conduct around the school campus:

1. VIP Cards

We remain strongly committed to the importance of our school values and 'Values in Practice' (VIP). We have been working with staff and student leaders to ensure that corridors remain safe and calm as lesson changeovers become more frequent. As a result, all students will be issued with a VIP card which will become part of their uniform at the beginning of the academic year. This card is small enough to be carried inside the blazer pocket. This card will allow staff to record positive comments and/or sign in the event of poor behaviour around school. **Students must always carry this card.**

The purpose of this card will be to ensure that students adhere to expectations during social times, especially in the canteen and in corridors. If a student is unable to produce this when asked by a member of staff, they will be issued with a detention. In addition to this, if a student's VIP Card is signed by a member of staff three times for a general infraction or six times for a uniform infraction, they will be issued with a detention. An automatic detention will be given each time a student exceeds the number of signatures on their card.

2. Principal's Detention

As part of our discussions with staff and student leaders we have also considered our approach to sanctions. Considering this, we have added this sanction as a further deterrent for poor behaviour and to promote good conduct. This detention will take place on **Friday** from **3.15 – 5.15pm (2-hours)**, each week. The Principal's detention will be issued for failure to meet expectations, in line with the school policy. As part of our routines, we will clarify our expectations of students and include an explanation of the changes to the policy through my assemblies at the start of the academic year.

Thank you once again for your ongoing support.

Yours sincerely,

D Cleary
Principal

Key Dates: Summer Term

- **Monday 8th July:** KS3 Celebration Evening (6-8pm)
- **Tuesday 9th July:** Art, Design and Textiles Exhibition (5-7pm) Main Hall and Bragg Hall
- **Wednesday 10th July:** End of Year Trips
- **Thursday 11th July:** SUMMER HOLIDAY BEGINS

INSET Dates

Tuesday 27th August 2024
Friday 4th October 2024
Friday 29th November 2024
Monday 27th January 2025
Friday 27th June 2025