



Robert Smyth Academy

Dear Families,

Welcome Back!

It has been a pleasure to welcome our students back into school this week following the summer break. I hope that our students will have enjoyed this time and will have had an opportunity to enjoy the sunshine.

GCSE and A-Level Results Days

Firstly, I know that many families will have experienced or at least followed the fantastic stories in the local media regarding GCSE and A-Level Results over the last fortnight. It goes without saying that we are enormously proud of the achievements of these students reflective of their hard work and the high-quality of teaching and support that they received during their time with Robert Smyth Academy. Inevitably, the success of our GCSE group has led to a significant increase in demand for places on A-Level courses.

Induction Day (Year 12)

On Wednesday, our new Year 12 group participated in an Induction Day which included a wide range of activities, discussions and exercises to enable them to meet new people including peers and members of staff so that they can prepare for their first day of term. We look forward to welcoming all Year 12 students on Monday morning. **Please note that Tutorials begin at 8.45 am and that Sixth Form Dress Code will apply:** <https://www.robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk/files/2022/06/2021-09-RSA-Sixth-Form-Dress-Code-2021.pdf>

Summer School and Start of Term (Year 7)

During the summer, we hosted over 150 students from our new Year 7 group who participated in the annual Summer School event designed to support students in effectively transitioning from primary to secondary school. This year, the students engaged fantastically well with the activities, and it was great to witness the increase in confidence and security for those students, which I know they will find helpful at the beginning of the term.

All Year 7 students started the academic year on Wednesday morning, and I would like to thank all families for the exceptionally high standards of punctuality, uniform, and behaviour that we experienced this morning. It was a privilege to welcome all students and to lead their first Expectations Assembly as Principal.

Building Work

Robert Smyth Academy published plans for a Planned Admission Number (PAN) expansion as part of a formal admissions consultation in October 2021. This expansion reflects the significant growth in applications for school places, which has led to the school remaining oversubscribed for the last four years.

As a result, we are delighted to confirm that building works have commenced to enable the construction of a new, two-storey building that will provide five additional science laboratories, eleven classrooms, a toilet block, and a student canteen. This is a very exciting development, and the site compound is now a highly visible feature of the school site, which will be in place for the next twelve months until completion.

I have spoken to students about the implications of this building work during Expectations Assemblies, including the impact on the following:

- **Fire Evacuation Procedures**
- **The importance of the 'one-way system' due to the pressure on corridors**
- **The introduction of a VIP Card to promote excellent conduct and safety around the school**

Whilst a development of this size will inevitably present some disruption, we are confident that we have good plans in place to manage this and all members of staff have engaged in Staff Training to ensure that we sustain high standards across the school.



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Expectations Assemblies

As part of our school routine, it is a tradition that the Principal will welcome students back during an Expectations Assembly, as a year group. I felt that it might be helpful to share some of the general themes and messages that have been shared with all students reflective of our School Values and the Behaviour Policy:

- We reflected on the nature of a community using the Olympic games as a reference point for individual successes as part of a collective and within the international community's framework.
- We presented an overview of some of the summer's most troubling domestic aspects, including the terrible events in Southport, the riots across the country, the increased levels of intolerance, and the distribution of blatant misinformation by prominent social media influencers.
- In this context, students were reminded of the importance of our school values in all they do so that they can always be the best versions of themselves (Respect, Succeed, Aspire).
- Students were reminded of our school protocol in case of a lockdown to keep them safe.
- Students were reminded of the importance of always following the one-way system.
- We reiterated our approach to merits, golden tickets, postcards and rewards.
- We reiterated the 'red lines' in the Behaviour Policy, and students were provided with an explanation of how the VIP card would be used around school.
- Students were reminded of the names and roles of every member of the Safeguarding Team. We have explicitly asked that students come forward and report any concerns rather than 'bottling it up'.
- We reminded students of the consistent learning routines they would see in lessons to promote their progress and attainment; this includes the importance of using whiteboards to engage in learning.
- Students have been reminded that we value their hard work and achievements, and I have reiterated the focus on merits, golden tickets, and postcards, which will remain a feature of our approach.
- Students have been notified that their conduct in school may impact their invitation to attend educational visits or other events such as school trips or The Prom, for example.
- We have reminded students that mobile phones may not be used in school. If they are, they will be confiscated for 48 hours, and a strong sanction will be applied, with no exceptions.
- We have reminded all students that the pursuit of the College Cup (2025) begins again with Moseley College beginning the title defence. All positive points accrued count toward this competition.
- Students have been reminded of homework expectations (included below for reference):

Key Stage 3 (Year 7-9):

- 1 x weekly homework task in English, Maths and Science
- 2 x half-termly homework tasks for History and Geography
- 1 x half-termly homework task for all other subjects
- MFL - Students will have a vocabulary test fortnightly on a list of words (in addition)

Key Stage 4 (Year 10-11):

- 1 x weekly homework task for English, Maths and Science
- 2 x fortnightly homework tasks for all GCSE Option subjects
- MFL - Students will have a vocabulary test fortnightly on a list of words (in addition)

Key Stage 5 (Year 12-13):

- For each hour of class teaching, students will be set an hour of homework.
- Students will use 'Private Study' time to complete A-Level coursework, homework and revision.



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Uniform

Whilst uniform has been generally very good. We have taken receipt of too many items of jewellery in the last two days as students have clearly forgotten the expectations from this part of the policy. We would be grateful if families could ensure that this is addressed over the weekend so that sanctions need not be applied in the future:

Jewellery

- Students may wear **one pair** of plain gold or silver discreet stud earrings (one in each earlobe).
- In Years 10 and 11 only, students may also wear **one** plain gold or silver ring and chain.
- Nothing else is permitted, e.g. **no nose studs or other body studs or bracelets** are to be worn.

Full uniform policy

<https://www.robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk/files/2024/08/RSA-Uniform-Policy-2024.pdf#uniform-policy/>

School photographer (Monday)

On Monday, our school photographer will be in school to photograph students in Year 7, 10 and 12. These pictures will be used as part of our registration system. Please ensure your child is suitably prepared!

Open Evening (Thursday)

Finally, please note that the school will close earlier than usual on Thursday next week in preparation for the annual Open Evening event. **The school will close at 12.40pm** in preparation. Students who are eligible for Free School Meals will be able to attend Sixteen07 (our canteen) at 12.40pm to collect a packed lunch on this day.

I appreciate that this is a multi-faceted first letter to begin the academic year, but I hope that it will prove to be useful for families so that you have a sense of the key messages that have been shared in school and the practicalities of changes experienced by students.

We look forward to the first full week of term next year and the start of the next chapter!

Thank you once again for your ongoing support.

Yours sincerely,

D Cleary
Principal



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KEY DATES FOR THE DIARY

INSET Dates

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

Term Dates

Please note that the term dates are available on our website:

<https://www.robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk/dates/term-dates-2024-25/>

Note

Next week more detailed information will be provided regarding key events in the calendar