



SIR THOMAS RICH'S SCHOOL

Oakleaze, Gloucester

From the Headmaster - 2 October

I would like to start my email by thanking pupils and parents for adjusting so well to our amended school day timings which came into effect this week. I am pleased to report that school coaches are leaving considerably earlier at the end of the day, which has cut down on long waits. The wearing of face coverings in certain high traffic areas of the school from 28 September has also gone well; if you need a reminder of those areas please see the information in our updated Welcome back Guide <https://strschool.co.uk/about/2020-09-26-Welcome-Back-Guide.pdf>.

If you have any questions about the timings of the school day, face coverings or any other matters at all, please don't hesitate to contact your son or daughter's Head of Year or Head of Key Stage, contact details for whom are below. I know the changes will have caused some families inconvenience for which I apologise, however, I can assure parents that these decisions are taken in order to provide the safest and best possible education given the circumstances.

Virtual Speech Day 9 October

Speech Day is usually one of the School's key occasions, and recognising our students' achievements is as important to us as it has ever been, particularly at this challenging time. Due to the pandemic, it is unfortunately not possible to run the event in its usual format in the School Hall. However, we would very much like to invite all students and their families to attend our Virtual Speech Day, which takes place on Friday 9 October at 7.30pm, and can be viewed on our YouTube channel, the link for which will be available on our website at www.strschool.co.uk on 9 October (pre-registration is not required).

Our guest speaker this year is Tom Plant, a former pupil who is now Director of Proliferation and Nuclear Policy for the Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies in Whitehall – the world's oldest independent think tank on international defence and security.

Our Virtual Speech Day will also feature the opportunity to hear from the Chairman of the Governors and one of the new School Captains as well as my address. A selection of awards will be presented to students and we will also enjoy, as is tradition, a rendition of the Tommy Psalm by the Brass Ensemble.

First Order Grades

As you will have read in the email from Mr Dempsey earlier this week, staff are preparing to give the 'First Orders'. For parents who are new to the School, 'Order grades' is the name we give to the regular progress grades awarded to pupils by teachers approximately five times a year. Order 1 Progress Reports which contain these grades will be published on 14 October and in order to access these you will need to ensure that you can log in to the Parent Gateway. Parents who are new to the School will have received an email invitation to register and existing parents who have forgotten their password can reset it through the Parent Gateway site. I hope that you find Parent Gateway useful but should you have any issues with either registering for or using it, please email parentgateway@strs.org.uk.

Shared Reading

This week has seen the launch of shared reading for pupils in Years 7 to 10 during tutor time. The benefits of reading both widely and frequently are well known: reading for 15 minutes each day can develop pupils' comprehension skills and critical thinking, whilst also enabling them to explore the world of the book, thereby fostering their understanding of the world around them. Reading aloud is especially important for creating a classroom community, generating discussions that encourage listeners to construct meanings, connect ideas, use prior knowledge, and question unfamiliar vocabulary. Throughout the year, students will read a selection of both classic and contemporary fiction across a range of genres; they will be required to predict, hypothesise, summarise, explain, define, question, clarify and, most importantly, engage with their reading. We look forward to hearing students' responses to the books they will encounter this year and hope they relish the opportunity to share their reading experiences with their tutor group.

National Poetry Day

Yesterday was National Poetry Day and it was fantastic to see students in Key Stages 3 and 4 busy writing their own poems in tutor time and English lesson. If you visit our Instagram account you will be able to see a video clip of three students in 9T giving a rendition of their joint effort: www.instagram.com/sirthomasrichs.

As I write this, the rain continues to be heard against my office window and I am reminded of the famous Gloucester composer, Ivor Gurney's poem *Soft Rain Beats Upon My Windows*. However, rather than print his poem, I should like to end my email with Emily Dickinson's "Hope" Is The Thing With Feathers:

"Hope" is the thing with feathers -

That perches in the soul -

And sings the tune without the words -
And never stops - at all -

And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -
And sore must be the storm -
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm -

I've heard it in the chillest land -
And on the strangest Sea -
Yet - never - in Extremity,
It asked a crumb - of me.

We must have the confidence to live in hope and truth.

With best wishes for the weekend

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Twitter: [@strsglos](https://twitter.com/strsglos)

Instagram: [@sirthomasrichs](https://www.instagram.com/sirthomasrichs)



Matthew Morgan,
Headmaster

Contact details for Heads of Year and Key Stage

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