



From the Headmaster

I have very much enjoyed welcoming prospective students and their parents into School this week for our autumn open days. There is something rather wonderful about seeing Sir Thomas Rich's through their eyes as they experience the tour of the School and hear more about the opportunities on offer. I am extremely proud of our Observators and Year 10 tour guides who have been fantastic ambassadors for Sir Thomas Rich's this week enthusing our young visitors and offering them their own perspective of life at Rich's. My thanks to all the students who took part in the open day arrangements, and to teachers for welcoming everyone into their classrooms so readily.

Covid-19 Vaccination Programme Update

As you are aware there has recently been a recommendation from the Chief Medical Officers (CMOs) that all children aged 12 to 15 should be offered a COVID-19 vaccination. The government has decided to go ahead with the offer of a vaccine to all 12 to 15-year-olds which will be delivered by local NHS services, through schools, in the same way as other vaccine programmes such as flu or HPV. They are recommending one dose for young people in this age group.

I would like to stress that this is a national directive and Sir Thomas Rich's is only providing the site to facilitate this offer. There will be no pressure or expectation at all from the School, indeed it is very important for the School to remain neutral in this matter, lest parents and students feel swayed to base their view on the School's stance.

The usual consent processes will apply with parents being asked to discuss the offer with their child and make an informed choice. I encourage you to speak to your child ahead of time so that there is agreement on consent by the date of the vaccination session. However, for the avoidance of any doubt, the vaccination is **not** mandatory and I can assure parents that if a child does not have parental consent and does not want to take the vaccine they will not receive it, and they will of course continue to attend school and participate in activities as usual. The NHS consent forms will be shared with you when they become available, most likely online, and the NHS will deal with collecting these in time for the vaccinations.

You may also find the following information useful:

- The School Age Immunisation Service (SAIS) is the provider of the programme, and will liaise with Sir Thomas Rich's with regards to a date and parental consent.
- Like all school-based vaccination programmes, the vaccine will be administered by trained healthcare professionals, following the usual approach to school-based immunisation.
- For students in Year 7 who turn 12 after the vaccination session date, those students who are absent or unwell on the date, those who change their mind about receiving the vaccine, or those who have recently had a Covid-19 infection, a follow-up date will be offered. It is anticipated that this will be delivered outside of school.
- All 16 and 17-year-olds will have already been offered the vaccine through the adult vaccination service. Some SAIS providers may have the capacity to offer the vaccination to 16 and 17-year-olds in school who have not yet taken up their first dose, but we do not yet know whether this will be the case at Rich's.
- At the moment, we do not know which of the four Covid-19 vaccines approved for use in the UK will be used, or when a second dose would be administered.

To help people access accurate information, the local NHS will be developing a dedicated page on the Gloucestershire NHS COVID-19 portal with factual information about the risks and benefits of the vaccine. There will also be a dedicated advice line and email address for parents or any young people who may wish to have a more detailed conversation. We will share these details as soon as we receive them.

You can read the full Government guidance for schools here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccination-resources-for-schools/covid-19-vaccination-programme-for-children-and-young-people-guidance-for-schools.

Speech Day Friday 8 October

Speech Day is usually one of the School's key occasions, recognising the achievements of prize winners and cataloguing success from the previous academic year. Again, this year, it is not possible to run the event in its usual format, but we will be going ahead with a 'blended' event. Prizes will be presented to the winners in person in the School Hall, with our students, their families and alumni warmly invited to attend the event virtually on Friday 8 October at 7.30 pm. The event can be viewed on our YouTube channel, the link for which will be available on our website at www.strschool.co.uk on 8 October (pre-registration is not required). It will be recorded and will be available to watch if you are not able to view it live. In addition to the awarding of prizes, I will address the School and there will be the opportunity to hear from the Chairman of Governors and the School Captains. Please do join us virtually for what I hope will be an interesting occasion – not least as, this year, the event will be totally live!

Parents' Association

I am always most grateful for the hard work of the Parents' Association, which not only raises invaluable funds for

School but also provides much entertainment and enjoyment through the fantastic social occasions it organises during the school year. They have just had a meeting to change their constitution and I am pleased that they are now officially called the Sir Thomas Rich's Parents, Teachers and Friends Association (PTFA). All parents, carers and guardians of present and past pupils of the school are automatically members; you can find out how to get involved with their work at www.strschool.co.uk/parents/association.

Year 7 Informal Parents' Evening

Year 7 parents have all been invited to attend our informal Year 7 Parents' Event on Wednesday 29 September, where they will be able to talk with other parents of new students and meet with teaching staff. Weather permitting, the event will be held outside and the tennis courts will be available for parking. Mr Davies - Head of Key Stage 3, Mr Hinds - Head of Year 7 and Mr Payne - Assistant Head of Year 7, will also be there.

A barbecue and refreshments will be available for purchase provided by our PTFA. There will be short talks from members of the PTFA and from me, but most of the event is set aside for informal conversation.

Limited Edition Rich's Rugby Balls

The Sixth Form fundraising team, led by the Observators, our senior prefects, have designed a new rugby ball in partnership with Ram Rugby. These high-quality rugby balls are a one-time release, and all profits go towards Year 13 fundraising. A great Christmas present or birthday gift for any Richian, young or old. Students in any year group can place an order for as many rugby balls as they wish:

1 rugby ball £15.99

2 rugby balls £27.99 and

3 rugby balls £38.99

The deadline to purchase is Friday 8 October and the balls are made to order, so there will be a delivery time of eight weeks. To order, email STRS.RAM@gmail.com.

Behaviour Policy

We are always striving to further develop a culture of respect throughout the School, which extends from courteous relationships within School to respecting the School environment. Every year, I am required to publish our Behaviour Policy, which I do so on the School website [here](#). In many respects there are very few changes to the general approach of promoting mutual respect and our desire to develop in students self-discipline; a thirst for learning; enquiring and creative minds; and an appreciation of our heritage.

The Behaviour Policy actively supports the School's aims, which are:

The achievement of the highest standards of work.

The achievement of the highest standards of behaviour.

The promotion of a wide range of extracurricular activities.

The achievement of the highest standards of support and guidance.

I thank all parents for your continued support in ensuring our Behaviour Policy remains effective.

Young Minds Matter

As you may know, we have been part of the Trailblazer initiative for some time. Run by the Gloucestershire NHS Foundation Trust, as part of Trailblazer's 'Young Minds Matter' scheme Education Mental Health Practitioners are based in 70 Gloucestershire schools, and we are very lucky to have NHS colleagues based with us in school to support our students. You can contact your child's Head of Year to access support from the Health Practitioners based here, plus the team offers a free, confidential text chat service for students: YMM Chat 07480 635723, available Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm.

Finally

The way that students old and new have thrown themselves into School life this term so far has impressed me. Although we may still face pandemic-related and other challenges, we are well prepared with extensive contingency plans to put in place should we need them. From an excellent Netball First Team win over Malvern College last Friday to Warhammer Club, Year 7 Rugby fixtures, Brass Band practice and the Year 12 trip to the Globe Theatre this week, it has been heartening to see so many of our students seizing the day and relishing the myriad of opportunities on offer and, dare I suggest, appreciating them just a little bit more having been without for so long! The Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius, often referred to as 'the wise', said in his work, *Meditations*, written in Greek while on campaign between 170 and 180CE, "Do not indulge in dreams of having what you have not, but reckon up the chief of the blessings you do possess, and then thankfully remember how you would crave for them if they were not yours". Wise indeed.

M. S. Morgan.

Matthew Morgan
HEADMASTER

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