



4 September 2024

Dear all,

As another term begins (I have just returned to my desk from the Chapel Service for the new Shells), I wanted to write with an update on one or two things.

I hope all the boys - and you – have had a restful Summer and that they return ready to make the most of the year ahead. As ever, I am grateful to all those staff who make sure we are well prepared; the work that goes on behind the scenes is, as you can imagine, considerable and I am always mindful of the effort to which the operational staff go. I am sure you will join with me in thanking them.

As you will have seen, we do have a major building site at the heart of the College as we embark on the extension and rebuild of the Music School. This has been a project long in the making and is the final piece of work associated with the expansion of the school; I am delighted it is underway and excited about what will emerge. Inevitably, there will be disruption in the four terms ahead, and we ask for your forbearance in terms of restricted parking and other limitations.

With the retirement of Ben Holden in the Summer, Niall Murphy takes on the role as Sub-Warden. The restructured College Management Team is now complete and I thought I would share the whole team with you for reference:

John Moule	Warden
Niall Murphy	Sub-Warden
Andrew Ashton	Bursar
David Anderson	Estates Bursar
Elisabeth Anderson	Development Director
Sarah Ballard	HR Director
Harry Crump	Deputy Head (Co-Curricular)
Julie Fletcher	Finance Director
Ed James	Deputy Head (Pastoral)
Sophie Langdale	Director of Admissions and Communications
Jonny Porter	Deputy Head (Academic)
Roger Shaw	Deputy Head (Systems)

As the new year begins, I want to pay tribute to boys and staff alike for some excellent results at A Level and GCSE. We were particularly pleased that the A*-B % at A level is at 92% (and, with remarks, rising!) and that the 9-7 % at GCSE was a healthy 85%. Both are significantly up on last year and are the result, we think, of particularly targeted interventions and approaches. Another highlight was the fact that 12 boys scored 11 Grade 9s or more at GCSE (one scored 13!). And, perhaps most importantly, we were really pleased with the university outcomes of the departing 6.2s, both here in the UK and abroad, particularly in the US.

Of course, such academic success came alongside the many achievements in other areas of College life that I will not repeat here; it was a year of outstanding achievement. What I will repeat is the

message of that synthesis; we believe strongly that the academic and co-curricular go together and, of course, only succeed when there is pastoral strength at the heart of it all. I am sure the coming year will prove the same again.

You will recall that we spent much time last year in ‘a conversation’ about the impact of all things digital and have adjusted our approach, not as radically as some but as a result of careful thought. We will be sending more information on that in one of the early Bulletins – and, as an aside, can I please encourage you always to refer to Bulletin on a weekly basis as the way to know what we are thinking and what is going on – and there will be an opportunity to hear more at a Talking Heads Webinar on 18 September. It is an ongoing debate and we intend to carry on reviewing the issues and to talk to boys, and you, about it. The ‘conversation’ continues.

I also wanted to make you aware of some changes in our reporting approach. We have been looking at how best to spread out formal touch-points with you, enhance the role of the Form Master in that process and ensure that the best use of staff – and your! - time is made. In all honesty, we felt that the cycle of reporting was not working as effectively as it might and hope some changes will mean both that you have more meaningful contact and that dons are relieved of the task of reports for reports’ sake. The following table describes the touch-points that will happen in each half-term, by year-group.

	Shell	Remove	Vth	6.1	6.2
MT1	Form Master Parent Meeting	Form Master Introduction	Form Master Introduction & Tutor Letter	Form Master Introduction	Form Master Introduction & Tutor Letter
MT2	Full Academic Report & Tutor Letter	Full Academic Report & Tutor Letter	Full Academic Report & Warden Report	Full Academic Report & Tutor Letter	Full Academic Report
LT1	Warden Report	Parent Meeting	Parent Meeting	Form Master Phone Call	Parent Meeting
LT2	Form Master Phone Call	Warden Report	Full Academic Report	Warden Report	Full Academic Report
ST1	Parent Meeting	Form Master Phone Call	Form Master Phone Call	Parent Meeting	Form Master Phone Call
ST2	Full Academic Report & Tutor Letter	Full Academic Report & Tutor Letter	Tutor Letter	Full Academic Report & Tutor Letter	Tutor Letter & Warden Report

Much is unchanged; every parent will receive two full reports from all teaching dons, two Tutor letters, a Warden report, a parents’ meeting and two formal touch points with Form Masters. The Form Master phone call is a new initiative and we hope it will give a good chance at an appropriate time in the year to have a personal chat to discuss and agree shared goals. Needless to say, we are here to help at any point with questions or concerns but we hope that the revised approach will give a clear sense of what to expect and for it to be meaningful feedback, at the right time, on how your sons are progressing.

Another topic to address - much though we might not want to - is the imminent introduction of VAT on independent school fees from January 2025. The speed of the introduction has surprised us, as it has the sector more widely, and with budgets already set for the year ahead, we are not alone in finding it a challenge to model scenarios effectively at such short notice. We fully

appreciate that is true for parents as well; it is not helpful that the detail of the policy in all its complexity is not yet clear and is not likely to be until after the budget on October 30th. Given that uncertainty, we are not yet in a position to indicate what the exact adjustment to our fees will be as a result of the new taxation but, as I have explained before, Council remains committed to three principles: not diluting the quality and breadth of a Radley education; remaining wedded to our Funded Places and Partnership programmes as central to our strategy; and ensuring that we look at scenarios - including VAT recovery - to help reduce the impact. The relevant Council committee will be meeting in the coming week and once they, and the wider Council, have reviewed developments, we will be in touch again with details of what the impact of government tax policy will be on the Radley fee.

Not a note to finish on. You might not have watched quite as much of the Olympics as I did – it would be difficult – but I am sure you join with me in being very proud of the three Old Radleian medallists: our congratulations to oarsmen Charlie Elwes (Gold) and to Tom George and Ollie Wynne-Griffith (both Silver). An amazing achievement.

It would be right, as we enter our final weeks as Tatler School of the Year, to close with a quote from their latest write-up on us: ‘it seems that anything is possible at this outstanding establishment’. I am sure that’s an exaggeration. But we will do our best.

Thank you for all your support in helping us make Radley what it is.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Moule', with a horizontal line underneath.

John Moule
Warden