



## Ranelagh School

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1<sup>st</sup> April 2021

Dear Parents / Carers

The COVID-19 worldwide crisis is unprecedented in our lifetime. Every government announcement over the last few months has left us aghast at how disruption on this scale could take hold with so little warning. The untold effect on daily life and everyone's emotional wellbeing has been our greatest concern. As a school we have tried to maintain some normality for you and the students. Schools have been at the front-line of supporting the national effort to fight the virus. The whole Ranelagh School community, like so many others across the world, has done all it can to support this effort. I continue to be overwhelmed by the numerous selfless offers of support for one another and our community that I see or hear about on a daily basis. For me, these acts demonstrate the Christian identity of our school of which I am so proud. I know that we still have some way to go before this pandemic is over, but with the vaccination programme and the responses like those already seen from our community, we are sure to get there.

Our Easter assembly this year was based on our understanding of the true meaning of Easter and how the message of hope might be relevant to our lives today. This message of hope and new possibilities that is such a key aspect of the Easter story.

In the Bible we are told that Jesus was arrested, tried and then crucified. Jesus had claimed to be the son of God – and now he was dying on a cross. In the Gospel of Luke, we read how this came across to some of those watching the crucifixion.

*Luke 23:35-39*

*The people stood there staring at Jesus, and the ringleaders made faces, taunting: 'He saved others. Let's see him save himself! The Messiah of God – ha! The Chosen – ha!'.... One of the criminals hanging alongside cursed him: 'Some Messiah you are! Save yourself! Save us!'*

As a school we have tried to imagine that we were one of Jesus' followers watching and hearing this and then tried to consider how we would be feeling now. You may feel useless and hopeless and you may be wondering what could be next, what to do with your life now.

Gladly, we know this is not how the story ends! Three days later Jesus rises from the dead. For his disciples this was a new hope – that even death cannot defeat Jesus. What had seemed to be a hopeless situation has transformed into a hope that is bigger than they ever imagined.

Cont.



I think the Easter story shows us that even when there appears to be no way forward, we can hope for something new and better, rather than have fear about the current position we are in. Hope carries on, no matter what the odds. I think that this is a really important message for us all, especially at this time. I believe that whatever the situation you are facing and however hopeless it seems, to always remember that there will come a time when something new will come. Choose to hope in this and not to fear.

### **Covid-19 and the Easter holiday - testing and reporting**

The DfE have recently emphasised the importance of both staff and students:

- ✓ Continuing to test twice a week over the Easter holidays (Monday and Thursday am)
- ✓ Reporting results to the school and NHS track and trace

Students have been given enough test kits to enable this level of testing

- ✓ Parents and carers only need to inform us of a positive case if a student has developed symptoms/received a positive home test result within 48 hours of last being in school. Please do this using the [trackandtrace@ranelagh.bonitas.org.uk](mailto:trackandtrace@ranelagh.bonitas.org.uk) email address which will be monitored on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> and Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> April only.
- ✓ We will then identify close contacts and advise self-isolation as appropriate.
- ✓ If a student develops symptoms/receives a positive test result after Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> April then please contact NHS test and trace or dial 119.

### **Uniform**

As the weather is now warming up, all students must return to wearing normal school uniform following the Easter holiday. Heads of Year and tutors will be checking this on our return. If a student wishes, then they may wear additional but invisible layers under their uniform. A reminder of our uniform can be found here <https://ranelagh.bonitas.org.uk/school-information/uniform/>

Girls may change to the summer uniform too after Easter. I am aware that some newer members to the school may have experienced difficulties sourcing the summer uniform. If this is the case, please do not worry. Please contact the relevant Head of Year and continue to wear the winter uniform.

I am currently reviewing the uniform and our supplier and will provide you with further details following the Easter break.

Cont.

## Cherry Blossom Trees - In memory of Alexa Roxas

Some of you may be aware that one year ago, we sadly lost one of our Year 13 students, Alexa Roxas, due to a tragic and fatal incident. This news was devastating for both students and staff in the school. Alexa was a bright, cheerful and creative student whose energy will be remembered by many.

In memory of Alexa and the time she shared in her life at this school, we have planted five cherry blossom trees running along the bank of the new path leading towards the sports court. The trees, which will flower in spring each year, will be a lasting reflection and celebration of Alexa's life and the smile that she brought to so many in the school.



The trees were planted by Ms Edmunds and a team of students from the current Year 13 cohort. This was no small feat and one that was done with efficiency, reflection and a smile.



## DEPARTMENT NEWS

### English

#### Library Lessons

February saw the arrival of LGBT+ History Month in the UK, otherwise known as Pride Month. In celebration of this event and to create more awareness of the LGBT+ community, students in Year 7, 8 and 9 learned about the history of Pride in the UK, homophobia and how to combat it, gender identity, as well as identity in general.

Year 7 students created posters about the things they love and the values their loves demonstrate. Some students love art and baking which shows their creativity and curiosity,

whilst others love sports which reveals their value in teamwork and fitness. But you'll be pleased to know that, on the whole, most students demonstrated their loyalty and kindness by their love for family and friends.

In year 8, students designed an outfit that is gender neutral, meaning anyone, no matter their gender identity, would be comfortable wearing it. There were some truly fantastic designs – year 8 are clearly a creative and empathetic year! Many designs considered the fit, fabrics and colours that could be comfortable but also expressive – just because it's a gender-neutral outfit does not mean it can't be fun!

Finally, year 9 were challenged with writing a 50-word message to their younger selves, giving advice on understanding identity. They could pick a moment in their past when they were going through a difficult time and give the advice they wished they'd received, or explain what they have learned about identity as they have grown. There was an abundance of heartfelt, thoughtful and eloquent messages – they were a pleasure to read! Some clearly had so much to say that they couldn't stick to the 50-word limit, writing above and beyond the initial task with bold and empathetic messages.



A selection of the stand-out work from each year group is now on display in the library.

Well done to everyone!



### Food Challenges



During lockdown, food classes were asked to complete the "Store cupboard Challenge" and the "pancake challenge", we received so many amazing photos of your delicious dishes at home we simply couldn't choose one. Well done to those who got involved and of course, willing parents who facilitated and hopefully sampled the food.



## Geography

Sadly, we have not been able to go on our usual fieldtrips for quite some time, however, during lockdown we asked our Key Stage 3 students to get away from their computers and get geographically creative, with models of physical landforms. Many of our year 7 students took on the challenge of creating a river formation, in the UK and around the world.

9 completed a unit on Plate Tectonics and produced some amazing videos of exploding volcanoes and models made out of any material they could find, which were very impressive.



Ruby Patterson – 9W



Mia Cornwell – 9W

Their creativity was to be admired!



Sky de Villers – 7X



Holly Bowering - 7U



Ollie Curtis – 7U

## ROUTINE INFORMATION

### School opening times

The School Office will be closed over the Easter holidays.

### A reminder from the Art Department.

We would like to stress the importance of students using their lab coats, during their Art lessons throughout Key stage 3.

Students should arrive at **every** Art lesson with their lab coat. We are a busy department using a lot of paint and other messy materials. Clearing up takes place at 3 sinks, as you can imagine the potential for materials to accidentally be transferred onto uniforms occurs very easily, as well as occasional spillages.

Students are reminded each lesson to bring their lab coats and to put them on for the duration of the lesson, including clearing up.

We appreciate that uniforms are expensive; the Art Department are unable to take any responsibility for uniforms that have paint or other materials on them should a student fail to listen to instruction/turn up to lessons without their lab coat, or should they remove the lab coat before clearing up.

We would appreciate it if you could support us by re-enforcing this at home.

### STAFFING

As is customary at the end of term we say goodbye to staff who are retiring or moving on to pastures new. We would like to thank the following colleagues for all that they have contributed in the classroom and beyond. We wish them well as they leave us; Paul Buckingham, Reprographics Manager, Hannah Elliot, Learning Support Assistant and Alex Ingram, Design & Technology Teacher.

### **New Staff**

At the end of this term, we welcomed Mr Andrew Aust, Reprographics Manager. We wish him every success as he settles into the Ranelagh family.

### SUPPORT FOR THE SCHOOL

**Chair of Governors** – Please see attached letter (Appendix 1).

**PTA** – Please find the PTA Newsletter (Appendix 2).

**Friends of Ranelagh** – update (Appendix 3).

**Prayer Group** – dates for the next meetings to be held in the Library are:

Monday 26<sup>th</sup> April – 7.30pm

Monday 14<sup>th</sup> June – 7.30pm

Currently these meetings will be held via Zoom, details of which will be sent out nearer the date. Students, staff and parents are welcome to attend.

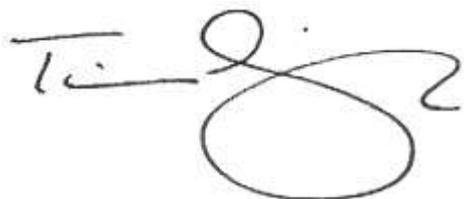
## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Thursday 1 April	<b>[End of Term]</b>
Monday 5 – Friday 16 April	Easter Holidays
Monday 19 April	<b>Professional Training Day</b>
Tuesday 20 April	<b>Start of Summer Term</b> <b>Summer Uniform</b>

### And finally...

I would like to wish you all a lovely Easter holiday. I hope you all have a relaxing time over the next few weeks and that you are able to catch up with family and friends. We are looking forward to returning in April with refreshed enthusiasm and hope for the future.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Griffith', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Mr T Griffith  
Headteacher



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Appendix 1

1<sup>st</sup> April 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

For the past two years the spring term has been a busy one, with a SIAMS inspection in 2019 and the recruitment of a new headteacher in 2020. This year has been no less busy, but certainly very different. Students have had to adapt to learning from home, away from their friends. Parents have worked with students to ensure home learning has been completed to a high standard. Staff have been dedicated to the well-being of students, the delivery of high-quality remote learning as well as supporting those students who have been in school and the continuance of other school functions. I would like to thank parents for supporting the students so well over the past term, our staff for the amazing job they have continued to do under very stressful conditions and all the volunteers who came forward to help with the logistics of having to conduct over 3000 lateral flow tests.

Who could have foreseen, a year ago when at Ranelagh we were filled with joy at the appointment of our new headteacher, what a year we would have ahead of us facing disruption that would be challenging, frustrating and heart-breaking. We could not have anticipated the time we would spend apart, isolated from our Ranelagh family, the new ways of working which we would have to come to terms with, the fears for our health and that of loved ones and the inevitable impact on our mental health. None of this has been easy, but the whole Ranelagh family can be proud of the way it has responded to the unusual times, truly living up to our vision of a dynamic learning community where people matter, and exemplifying the words of 2 Timothy 1.7.

Many of us will have been filled with despair and hopelessness at times, echoing Jesus' cry – my God, my God, why have you forsaken me. However, we have also seen the light of Christ shining out in the way people have reached out and supported one another. We have seen it in the dedication of teachers, medical staff and other key workers, as well as Good Samaritans who have provided services for those isolating and in everyday simple acts of kindness. One of the positives of the pandemic has been the way in which people have found ways to help one another, reminding us of the fact that Jesus came to serve rather than to be served.

Whilst we have inevitably missed things during the past year, such as the opportunity to share in extracurricular activities, we will have perhaps liked certain changes such as avoiding rush hour or not having to wear full school uniform. Hopefully, everyone will have found what a popular comedy show has termed 'covid keepers', those things in which we have discovered joy during the pandemic that we want to keep in our lives. Perhaps it has been family walks, reading books or more time for other simple pleasures. Personally, as a regular attendee at spoken Eucharist in normal times, I have enjoyed renewing my acquaintance with favourite hymns during online morning prayer, beautifully sung by Rev. Malcolm Chalmers. One of my favourites, 'In Christ alone' by Stuart Townsend has provided reassurance during difficult times, reminding me that God is with us through everything - 'my comforter', 'my all in all', commanding my destiny 'from life's first cry to final breath'.



All cultures and religions celebrate new life or rebirth in the spring and for Christians the resurrection carries a message of hope. This year such sentiments seem particularly relevant, as we finally begin to see light at the end of the tunnel in our search for good news that we are coming out of this time of trial. We have good reason to be hopeful, as our students return to school to meet again with their friends and our teachers utilise their experience to ensure that students continue to learn in a safe and supportive environment. We look forward to the resumption of sporting activities, choirs, music ensembles and other clubs. Jesus came that we might have life and live it abundantly. So, let us have hope that this Easter season, although maybe still different from our usual celebrations, will be the start of our being able to live our lives abundantly once more.

I would like to wish you all a relaxing break, so that we come back refreshed for the summer term ready to embrace new opportunities.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Louise Hodkinson', written in a cursive style.

**Louise Hodkinson**  
**Chair of Governors**



Dear Parents and Carers,

Appendix 2

## Quiz Night

As one of Ranelagh's time old traditions we're delighted that, in spite of it being online, this year's Quiz Night sold out! There were 22 teams altogether that took part in Friday's Quiz Night, which was brilliantly delivered by Quizmaster and parent, Simon Hutson. Congratulations to the winning team – 'Les Quizerables' (aka the school senior leadership team 😊)! We're delighted that the event raised in excess of **£600** profit for the school which once again will be matched by Microsoft in due course, giving us more than **£1200** towards this year's fundraising goals. A BIG thank you to Microsoft, a huge thank you to everyone for supporting this event, and most especially to Simon for a most enjoyable evening.

## Ranelagh Facebook Market

Thanks to all our buyers and sellers who have supported the [Ranelagh Facebook market](#) this term. It has been great to support some fabulous local businesses and to help Ranelagh families out with shopping during the pandemic. Seller advertising fees have helped to top up our fundraising pot too, which benefits our children so it's a triple win! We'll reopen the market again at a later date so keep an eye out for our next campaign.

## Bag 2 School

A reminder that we have booked a collection day for donated clothing for **Friday 18 June** so there's plenty of time to have a sort out and bag things up ready to drop off. We will advise you of drop off locations and dates when these have been confirmed – please hold onto items until then.

## Pre-Loved Uniform & Textbook Donations

We hope to hold a second-hand uniform sale in the summer term and are appealing for any pre-loved uniform donations to increase our stocks. A cage is outside reception for you to drop off any unwanted uniform or revision guides. Items are sold at our PTA second hand uniform sales and raise vital funds for our school. Find out more [about SHU sales](#) on the school website.

## Online Auction

For many years, we have had a 'silent auction' at our Christmas fairs and Founders Days to help raise money for our school. This year in light of COVID restrictions we have decided to revamp our auction and take it online. Doing that allows us to expand our audience, increase the timescale over which we can accept bids, and make it easier, and safer, for supporters to make payments online through a secure auction site.

**Unfortunately, more and more companies are tightening their belts when it comes to donations and so we need your help (please...)!**

- **Are you a parent who has their own business who could donate us a gift voucher or an item to auction?**
- **Could you encourage your employer to donate an experience voucher for your place of work or a gift voucher to spend in store?**
- **There are several big companies in Bracknell - do you work for one? Could they donate us an item to auction? We have heard of local companies donating things like cameras, power tools, and games consoles to other schools.....?**

We will gratefully accept ANY donations that are suitable for auction or prizes at other PTA events. We are hoping to launch our auction in May so would welcome donations anytime between now and then. Donations can be:

- Dropped to our PTA co-chair (Liz) who lives near Ranelagh – 10 Lysander Drive, The Parks, Bracknell, RG12 9NZ.
- Emailed over to us (for vouchers etc) - [pta@ranelagh.bonitas.org.uk](mailto:pta@ranelagh.bonitas.org.uk)
- Posted to the school (please mark for the attention of the PTA)



Or [email us](#) and one of our committee members will come and collect from you directly.

If any company needs us to contact them before they will provide support, please just ping us an email with the details and we'll happily provide what they need. Thank you in advance for your support!

### Does your Company have a Match Funding Scheme?

Like Microsoft, there are many companies that support charities through match funding schemes. This means they match any funds raised for charitable causes if one of their employees is linked to the charity event. For example, Microsoft will match the £600 we raised for the recent Quiz Night giving us an amazing £1200 because two Ranelagh parents work for Microsoft. So, if you work for any of the companies highlighted below or your company supports charities in this way please do get in touch with us.

### Next Committee Meeting

Our next committee meeting is taking place via Zoom on **Tuesday 25 May at 6.30pm**. Email [pta@ranelagh.bonitas.org.uk](mailto:pta@ranelagh.bonitas.org.uk) for the meeting details. Please join us if you can – everyone is welcome.

### Keep in Touch

You can keep in touch via school emails, our Facebook page at [ranelaghschoolpta](#) where we post notices and reminders throughout the term and we add updates to the school website [PTA pages](#) throughout the year. Alternatively, you can email [pta@ranelagh.bonitas.org.uk](mailto:pta@ranelagh.bonitas.org.uk). For Second Hand Uniform email queries to [secondhanduniform@ranelagh.bonitas.org.uk](mailto:secondhanduniform@ranelagh.bonitas.org.uk)

Wishing you all a very Happy Easter. From Ranelagh PTA

**Ranelagh Matchfunding Appeal**

Do you work for any of these companies or thousands like them?  
If you do and you support a PTA event, they will make a donation to match your efforts.

Contact us if you think you can help.  
[pta@ranelagh.bonitas.org.uk](mailto:pta@ranelagh.bonitas.org.uk)



## Raising money for your children's benefit

Dear fellow parent

I very much hope that you and yours are keeping safe and well and, like me, am sure that you are looking forward to better times.

With restrictions set to ease in April, I suspect that many of you will be planning to see loved ones and friends and perhaps get away for a break somewhere in the UK during the Easter holiday; if so, do keep safe.

The Friends continue to meet, albeit remotely, and give consideration to how best to support the school and its students; I will be able to provide a further update on how the Friends is doing this in my next letter to you.

Two of the ways you can help are, first, by donating (and many of you already are and for that I thank you); if you do not currently donate, please contact me and I will send you a form or use the one available on the Friends page of the school website. Remember, the purpose of the Friends is as stated at the top of this letter – that is all we do.

The second way you can help is by becoming a trustee; we have termly meetings to review our income and make decisions on how we best to spend the funds we receive. If you would like to know more about the Friends and how you could get involved, please do contact me or one of the other trustees; again, further details are on the Friends page.

I am sure that we all agree that we want the Friends to thrive and continue to benefit the school and students. I say this not just as a Friend but also as a parent; my daughter left the school in 2019 and my son is set to do so this summer but the benefits they derived from the Friends' contributions need to continue to be available to current and future students.

To conclude, may I wish you and your family a very happy Easter.

Kind regards

**Robert McLean**

Chairman

[Friends of Ranelagh](#)

e: [robbiemcl@hotmail.com](mailto:robbiemcl@hotmail.com)