



22nd July 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

And finally...!

We have enjoyed a very hot, but hugely positive end of term. Typically, students coped admirably with the extreme conditions and it has been lovely to celebrate so many wonderful achievements from the last year over the last couple of days.

As ever, at the end of the school year we have to say farewell to departing colleagues. I mentioned the full list to students in the whole school assembly yesterday, but I will just make a few specific mentions of those that have given particularly long service in today's letter:

- Richard Howe, who has served for 18 years, much of which as Head of IT
- Gareth Grant, who has served for 27 years as Teacher of DT
- Sally Newton, who has served for 29 years as Teacher of History (including 16 Years as Head of History, and Head of Humanities for a few years as well)
- and Geoff Smith, who served for nearly 35 years as Teacher of Maths and then Exams Manager (who actually retired at Easter but for whom we hadn't had the opportunity to say a proper farewell)

I was delighted to present Sally with a framed certificate as a Bronze Winner of a 'Lifetime Achievement Award' from the National Teaching Awards. This is thoroughly deserved after so many years of some of the most inspiring service to young people that I can imagine.

I would also like to mention Paul Bainbridge, who isn't leaving, but is stepping down as Head of Cromarty House after 18 years. Families with children in (or who have gone through) Cromarty House know the very significant impact that Paul has had over that time. He has led the pastoral care of his students with incredible commitment and empathy. We thank him for his service.

My 'term of office' at Gordano officially continues until 31st August, and there are still plenty of loose ends to tie off and the GCSE and A Level results seasons to oversee. If you are waiting on a response from me /us from recent communications, my apologies for the slight delay as we have been 'seeing out' the end of the school year; we will be responding to these in coming days. However, yesterday *effectively* marked the end of my time as Headteacher at Gordano, and this will be my last letter to all parents.

Serving 14 years as a Senior Leader at Gordano, including 5 as Headteacher, has been an immense privilege. Being 'the' secondary school of the town, very much at the heart of its community, with a wonderful Governing Body, an incredibly supportive parent body, and a hugely talented and dedicated group of staff, is pretty special and, of course, a real 'golden ticket' as a Headteacher. But add to that the most wonderful, committed, enthusiastic and caring group of young people to work alongside, and I think it's pretty unique.

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My own secondary education wasn't always smooth sailing, but the positive influence of a small number of staff and a wide range of opportunities (especially beyond the classroom) allowed me to discover 'who I was', nurtured me and set me on a path that I feel very lucky to have found. My drive as an educator is to seek to enable all of our students to do just that - in a safe and happy environment, to discover and nurture their talents and passions so that they can find a path that allows them to grow, flourish and go out into their world and make a positive difference. To have been able to have the chance to play such a significant role in that for the families of Portishead (and surrounds) has been a complete privilege.

The last few years have thrown some pretty significant challenges our way, not least a global pandemic and in the context of a school that has grown to be one of the largest in the South West. As with any time of change and challenge, we won't have got it all right all of the time, but I am very proud overall of how we have got through that together, as a whole community, in continuing to serve that aim for our young people. My huge thanks to you, as parents, for the very significant part you have had to play in that. It is so vital that home and school are working 'in sync' to help steer and guide your children through an incredibly challenging phase of life, and the way that you seek to work hand in hand with the school is absolutely vital in helping them navigate an already confusing world.

I am delighted to be leaving Gordano in such expert hands. Louise Blundell (new Headteacher), Carolyn Tipler (Deputy Headteacher - Learning and Standards) and Johnny Mailey (new Deputy Headteacher - Pastoral and Behaviour), together with the Senior Team, will take the school brilliantly into an exciting and hugely successful new chapter. As it should, that will involve some change, which will be necessary and healthy for the next phase of the school's development in a rapidly changing world.

Next school year starts on Monday 5th September for Years 7 and 12, and Tuesday 6th September for all other years. All other information will follow from the team in due course.

Wishing you every health and happiness for you and yours over the summer, and with every best wish for the future.

With very warm wishes,



Tom Inman
Headteacher