



Headteacher's Update

1 May 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you are all looking forward to the lovely sunny Bank Holiday that we have been promised. The weather this week has also been excellent, and it has been a pleasure to see students enjoying the sunshine and playing so nicely during break and lunchtimes. One member of staff remarked yesterday that the lunchtimes at River Academy were “joyous”, and I have certainly been impressed by the positive way the students have engaged with our questions this week which have been around the topics of revision and self-organisation as we prepare for our Mastery Showcase week

Our Mastery Showcase will take place on **Monday 11 May**. Timetables outlining the order of assessments will be sent out this Tuesday. Tutors will guide students through this timetable. It will also be emailed home to all parents, so that you can support students with their organisation and revision. Please note that during Mastery Showcase week we will not be running any extracurricular clubs, **apart from Homework Club. This includes Electives and therefore on Wednesday 13.5.26 school will finish at 3.35pm.**

It has been fantastic to see so many students engaging so positively with extracurricular activities over the last week. On Thursday evening, around 50 students attended Athletics Club — a huge turnout. Well, done to Benas, who completed an impressive 400-metre repetition session in front of Dr Dukinfield! It was also lovely to welcome 20 Year 7 students to the *History of Board Games* Silver



Programme workshop.

Next week, we are pleased to be hosting another Silver Programme workshop, this time focusing on Portuguese Poetry, led by our very own Mr Fasham. It is wonderful to see so many Year 7 students already signed up, and I would encourage families to remind their sons and daughters to get involved if they have not yet done so.

The poster features a dark blue header with the title 'Galician-Portuguese Poetry' in white cursive, followed by '5th May – 15h40 – room 1.66'. On the right is a hexagonal logo for 'RIVER ACADEMY Silver Programme' with a stylized plant icon. Below the header, a dark blue box says 'Free event!'. To the left, a teal box contains the text: 'Come and discover one of the hidden delights of European poetry – the cantigas of medieval Portugal and Galicia'. Below this is a dark blue box: 'Sign up required – outside 1.66'. In the center, there is an image of the Portuguese flag, an open manuscript, and a coat of arms. To the right, a grey speech bubble says 'WHO IS IT FOR? Y7 & Y8'. At the bottom right, a teal box says 'Speak to Mr Fasham if you have any questions.'

Thank you for your continued support with attendance. This week we achieved 96% attendance, which is excellent to see. At River Academy, we often say that *excellence is a habit*, and strong attendance habits will serve our students well both now and in the future.

I would also like to commend our students for their outstanding conduct. We have had to cover more lessons than usual over the past couple of weeks due to staff training and paternity leave. Throughout this time, students have shown maturity, respect, and consistency in their behaviour, demonstrating the same courtesy to cover staff as they do to their regular teachers.

This week, we launched our **River Rewards initiative** and asked for the support of our River Community to help incentivise students as they approach their Mastery Showcase Assessment Week. A small contribution to our wish list will go a long way and will enable us to reward those students who show determination as they prepare for their

The graphic shows three students in school uniforms smiling. The text 'River Rewards!' is written in large, bold, orange letters. Below it, it says 'River Academy needs your help!' in a cursive font. On the right is a yellow trophy icon. The River Academy logo is in the top right corner.

assessments.

https://www.amazon.co.uk/hz/wishlist/ls/1Z54E6V8EXHWT?ref=wl_share

A huge thank you to those who have already shown their support. There is more on the way and already we have some great prizes to recognise our students' efforts!



Do give your child a nudge to bring in their flash cards and show Mrs Billingham so that they can gain their raffle ticket! Students can get a raffle ticket EVERY day up until the last day of the Mastery Showcase Week.

We have also trialled a new initiative recently, where staff contribute to a Microsoft Teams “Shout-Out” channel, recording positive moments from lessons during the day. These are then shared with students during line-up, providing live feedback and praise. It

has been fantastic to see the positive response from students and the impact this has had on motivation and pride.

Looking ahead, we have some exciting opportunities planned. Shortly, we aim to take all of Year 8 to Rivermead for a water safety course; further details will be shared next week. Additionally, students involved in Rowing Club, in partnership with London Youth Rowing, will soon be heading out on the water for the first time — an extremely exciting milestone as they get their oars out and put their training into practice.

A reminder that Monday is a Bank Holiday, and therefore school will reopen on Tuesday morning.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support. It is a real privilege to lead a school where students, staff, and parents work so harmoniously together to provide a rich and positive educational experience for all.

Have a wonderful weekend — enjoy the sunshine, remember the sun cream, and I look forward to seeing everyone again on Tuesday.

Best wishes,

Andy Hartley

Headteacher