



## Headteacher's Update

5 June 2026

**Dear Parents and Carers,**

Welcome back! I hope you all enjoyed a fabulous half term. The sunshine certainly made it rather special, and it was wonderful to have a week off with guaranteed warm weather each day. I know that both staff and students have returned feeling refreshed and ready for the busy weeks ahead.

### **Re-set**

This week has been another packed and incredibly enjoyable one at River Academy. We began with our usual "reset" process, ensuring that all students are clear about expectations as we start the new half term. This included revisiting routines, checking timetables, issuing new planners, and ensuring that students are fully equipped and dressed for success as River students. This additional time always proves invaluable, providing students with the mental space they need to re-engage and be fully prepared for their first lessons after a break.

### **KPMG**



On Tuesday, over 20 of our Year 8 students visited KPMG in Reading for an extended morning trip. This provided a fantastic opportunity for them to explore careers within the organisation, including accountancy, consulting, and technology roles. The feedback from KPMG was exceptional. They commented on the students' politeness, engagement, and enthusiasm for learning, asking how we



achieve such high standards. We are incredibly proud of how our students represented the school.

### **Attendance**

I also spent Monday morning meeting with the local authority to review our attendance figures. I am delighted to share that we are currently the number one school in the local authority for attendance — a fantastic

achievement for our community. However, I remain slightly frustrated that some students still miss the first Monday after a holiday or the final days before a break. While I understand the pressures families face with travel costs and timings, these missed days mean students lose valuable preparation and key learning that supports their success.

### **Weather**

The wetter weather this week has also tested some of our routines, but I am pleased to report that the calm and consistent approach from staff has paid off. Students have transitioned seamlessly between the playground, canteen, and hall, organising themselves—often alphabetically—with minimal adult intervention. It has been a real pleasure to observe.

### **Moral Question**

On Thursday lunchtime, students considered a moral question: *Should the government provide free public transport for young people?* The quality of discussion was excellent across both year groups. I was particularly impressed by one Year 7 student who suggested that support should be means-tested, ensuring those who need it most receive free travel, while others contribute. Another student argued for reduced fares rather than free provision, supported by a fair increase in taxation. It is inspiring to see our students thinking so thoughtfully about real-world issues and demonstrating an understanding that extends well beyond the classroom.

## **Visit**

Next week, we look forward to welcoming Brian Grady, Director of Children's Services for Reading Borough Council. Brian has been a strong supporter of River Academy since its inception and a great advocate for our approach. I am looking forward to showing him our school in action and discussing the progress we continue to make.

## **Vacancies**

### **[Maiden Erlegh Trust - VACANCIES \(MY NEW TERM\)](#)**

As we continue to grow, we are currently advertising our final tranche of support staff vacancies for September. If you, or someone you know, are interested in working in a school environment, I encourage you to explore these opportunities and apply.

## **Trips**

Looking ahead, we are very excited for next week's trips. Year 8 will be visiting the seaside to explore geography and science themes, while Year 7 will be heading into Reading to make connections between their studies and their local area. Thank you, as always, for your support—both practical and financial—in making these enriching experiences possible for our students.

Thank you for your continued support. Have a wonderful weekend.

**Best wishes,**

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "A. Hartley".

**Andy Hartley,**

Headteacher