

# OUR KIDS

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## Royal St. George's College

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Written by Megan Easton

Since 1998, families have trusted Our Kids to help navigate the private school landscape. Drawing on years working with education experts, parents, and school insiders, Our Kids provides families with insights into the top schools—and into choosing the right school for a child.

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## Preface

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*“We all recognize that if we want our students to be engaged, there has to be some lightness in the learning. There has to be time for play. Our boys work hard, but they also know how to have fun.”*  
—Anna Magor, Head of Junior School, Royal St. George's College

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Every private school is unique, with its own character, facilities, programming, culture, and reason for being. No private school is right for every learner, but for every learner there is a right school. Your task—and it isn't an easy one—is to find the right school for your child; the one that offers the right challenges and the necessary supports; the one where she feels comfortable and included; the one that allows him to grow into a sense of himself and his place in the world; the one where people laugh at their jokes, and ache in the same places. The one where they know, without question: those are my goals, these are my friends, this is my school.

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We know how hard it can be for you, as a parent, to research private schools. For more than two decades we've published Canada's most trusted annual private school guide, building on insights gained over years of work. The *Our Kids Private School Reviews* series of

book-length reviews is aimed at information-seeking families, providing a detailed look at the offerings, the traditions, and the culture of each school. Titles published in this series to date include:

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## Details: Royal St. George's College

**Founded:** 1964

**Enrolment:** 426

**Grades:** 3 to 12

**Gender:** Boys

**Living Arrangements:** Day

**Language Of Instruction:** English

**School Focus:** Academic

**Developmental Priorities:** Balanced, Intellectual

**Curriculum:** Progressive

**Curriculum Pace:** Standard-enriched

**Academic Culture:** Challenging



## Introduction

By its name, you might assume that Royal St. George's College is rooted in values that tend toward the traditional. And you'd be partly right, in that RSGC was founded as an Anglican choir school and expects its boys to be hard-working, polite, and ambitious. But the school puts equal weight on students being happy, well-rounded, and compassionate. It's an intriguing balance that could just as easily not work, but it does—and remarkably well.

The academic program is challenging and the standards are high at RSGC. Yet academics are also relational, grounded in helping each student find his passion and providing opportunities to stretch and grow. In the Junior School, the pedagogical approach is progressive and concentrates on fostering foundational skills such as collaboration and inquiry. The Senior School builds on this foundation. Advanced Placement (AP) courses, including the AP Capstone Diploma, enhance the course offerings, providing one of several enrichment opportunities for students. STEM learning is pervasive throughout the grades, and the Design Engineering Studio is a lively hub for discovery. Boys who have a passion for engineering and design can pursue the Advanced Computer Engineering School (ACES) curricula in Grades 10 to 12.

Character education is given equal weight, and it doesn't take long to see that the school credo established by its founders—"Manners Maketh Men"—lives on at RSGC. Everyone we spoke to attests to the fact that the boys tend to be noticeably courteous, but also

genuinely nice. This was also plain in our own communications with students, most notably in the two groups of boys who provided tours of the Junior and Senior Schools.

Head of School Stephen Beatty wasn't the only member of the school community to report that parents seek out the school because of their encounters with current or former RSGC students. "They often say that our graduates were the nicest guys they knew at university," says Beatty. "Or they'll meet boys their son's age, be impressed by them and find out they go here." Beyond prospective families, members of the wider community (school bus drivers, students at Toronto's girls' schools) often comment to staff members that RSGC boys are the most considerate and pleasant to be around. According to one Grade 12 student, the school's reputation on this front was the leading attraction for his parents. "They knew the RSGC motto and that students lived up to it, and they wanted me immersed in that type of environment."

Nobody tried to convince us that RSGC produces boys who are perfectly behaved 24/7. Rather, there's agreement that the students reflect RSGC's unique culture. "We don't necessarily teach character education," says Paul O'Leary, Head of the Senior School. "We simply live it and model it every day. It's just part of who we are." Like the other teachers, parents, and students we spoke to, O'Leary attributes the culture to the school's promise that boys will be "known and loved." More than a slogan, the commitment is entrenched throughout the school's operations. "This is a place that lives and breathes humane and compassionate values in a way that not every school does," says Senior School teacher John Lambersky. "Some of that is the long-term DNA of the school, and some comes from Steve joining us as principal 10 years ago. He leads from the heart, which is very telling considering that he's an old boy."

Underpinning everything at RSGC is the belief that when boys feel cared for and happy, they learn well. Many community members we spoke to remarked on the amount of laughter at the school. "It's a very joyful place," says Junior School head Anna Magor. "We

all recognize that if we want our students to be engaged, there has to be some lightness in the learning. There has to be time for play. Our boys work hard, but they also know how to have fun." Or, in the words of one Grade 8 student, "there's a certain spirit here that makes everyone happy to come to school every day."



# 1

## Basics and background

Royal St. George's College is an urban day school located in the historic Annex neighbourhood of downtown Toronto. Howland Avenue is a leafy residential street that runs north of Bloor Street and south of Dupont Street. Enrolment hovers around 425 students, making it considerably smaller than the other boys' schools in the city. This allows for small class sizes, something the students we spoke with frequently pointed to not just as a learning advantage, but as a confidence-builder. "Because we're a small school with small classes, I think everybody feels more heard," says one Grade 7 student. The campus's footprint is also much less than its peers. Since its founding in 1964, renovations and additions have maximized the available space and kept pace with the latest in educational amenities.

Some community members argue that Ketchum Hall—transformed in recent years from a simple dining hall to a great hall—is the beating heart of the school, serving as both the lunchroom and the location for student-run assemblies. It combines old and new seamlessly, much like the school itself. There's a soaring wood-pannelled ceiling surrounding a bank of skylights, a gas fireplace, a massive digital screen, stained glass windows, and a well-worn dining table from the original RSGC dining hall hanging like art. An eclectic mix of quotes are inscribed on the central wood panels high above, bearing wisdom from literary men and women such as Shakespeare, Wordsworth, and Canadian L.M. Montgomery.

Another favourite spot, especially among the boys, is the tarmac behind the buildings where pick-up games are always on the go during gym or breaks. Others point to the school chapel, built in the late 1800s as the intended cathedral for the Anglican Church. The entire cathedral was never completed, but this first building is majestic in itself. "It's the most magnificent part of this campus, and I take great personal responsibility for its upkeep and care," says Beatty. "Apart from any religious connection, sitting inside this architectural gem is a moving experience." RSGC's administrative hub is located in what was the Bishop's residence, See House.

The Junior School recently completed a major renovation that included the creation of more collaborative, flexible learning spaces and informal meeting areas, along with enhanced lighting and air quality for all classrooms. The grade three to six learning spaces are designed to offer small group instruction, project centers and quiet zones. The lower-level classrooms for Grades 7 and 8, complete with smaller studios and nooks came together in a single, multi-purpose learning environment nicknamed the "Fish Bowl" by students. The Junior School was purpose-built for collaborative teaching and learning. A full-size gym, airy art studio, STEM labs, and theatre round out the facilities. The Junior School boys who led our tour all enjoyed highlighting their favourite features in the new spaces.

Next up on the infrastructure priority list is a refresh of the Senior School. One other interesting note: RSGC prioritizes sustainability in its built environment and curriculum. It's been certified with EcoSchools Canada since 2014 and recently achieved the highest possible certification level, Platinum.

Some traditions run deep at RSGC, including weekly chapel attended by the whole school community and a House system named for major English cathedrals. There's no secret handshake, but from the day they arrive the boys do learn and practice the three steps of the "Georgian handshake": make eye contact, have a firm grip, and say something to introduce yourself. It's another hallmark of the polite young men the school turns out.

RSGC's founders established the school on the grounds of St. Alban's Church and the surrounding property on Howland Avenue in the 1960s, ultimately buying the property in the 1990s. It had been the cathedral of the Anglican Diocese of Toronto from 1883 until 1935, the only building completed of several that were planned before the archbishop cancelled further construction. Today the partial cathedral serves as the school's chapel, a gathering place for spiritual services and discussion. The students we spoke to emphasized that the chapel's role at RSGC today has far transcended its original religious purpose. "Going to chapel—it's not really a Christian thing," says one. "It's more like a special place for the whole school to gather to hear people speak who might be from different countries or different religions, or just alumni who have something important to talk about." He adds, as someone who sings in the choir, "the acoustics are really nice, too."

The dream of RSGC began in the 1950s with founders John Bradley and founding Headmaster Jack Wright, who later recruited some of their fellow teachers at St. Andrew's College in Aurora—including Wright's successor John Allen. Together, they envisioned a place that combined the training of boy choristers in the music and liturgy of the Anglican Church with the best attributes of independent schools. When RSGC opened its doors in 1964, 72 boys in the signature maroon blazer (the navy blue of the Senior School came later) began learning on a relatively bare-bones campus that literally included a church basement.

"It wasn't new and modern," says one member of the first-ever graduating class in a past issue of the school's alumni magazine. "You had teachers fixing the plumbing. You had a gym with a 14-foot ceiling—you definitely couldn't shoot three-pointers. But it was an excellent education." In the same article, one of his classmates commented on the slightly "Wild West" feel of those early years. "The teachers had all been masters at other schools, and this was a great start-up experiment for them." The founding classmates describe high academic standards, camaraderie, and a spirit of exploration,

with field trips to neighbouring U of T to hear Marshall McLuhan speak, for example.

In the early 1970s, RSGC built Founders' Hall, a three-story structure at the west end of St. Alban's Church that added new classrooms, a gym, a library, and staff facilities. The school received official "Royal" designation by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on its 25th anniversary in 1989, making it the only pre-university institution in Canada with that distinction. The late nineties saw some major construction, with additions to both the Senior and Junior Schools. A building campaign from 2010–2012 resulted in several new facilities, and the latest revamp was the Junior School redevelopment, completed in 2019.

Through all of these changes, the chapel remained in its original glory, though it did withstand a minor fire about a decade ago. While RSGC has been a multi-faith community for decades, it's continued to honour its Anglican traditions. Until the pandemic hit, the whole school community gathered weekly for a service conducted by the chaplain and accompanied by the choir. "We believe that our students should ask spiritual questions," says Beatty. "But we also recognize that we live in a deeply diverse city and country that are questioning some of the traditions we hold here. Our chapel services aren't evangelical, but we have a lot of students who either have no religious faith or are Jewish, Muslim, Hindu etc. We're starting to ask important questions about whether these traditions might be standing in the way of their feeling a true sense of belonging."

One Hindu-Christian student we spoke to, who began singing in a choir for the first time in his life after coming to RSGC in Grade 7, says he and his classmates do feel comfortable in chapel. "I have a lot of friends who aren't religious, or who are religious but not Christian, and we all feel welcome." A Jewish student, who's new to the school, said his parents didn't initially consider RSGC because of their perception of its religious foundation. "They were worried that it wasn't the same faith as us, but then we visited and

talked to people, which reassured them. My first time at chapel confirmed that it's about spirituality, not one religion."

Yet Beatty says the school can go further, and the pandemic pause on rituals such as chapel presented an opportunity for reflection and possible revision. "Chapel will always be our school's place to gather and talk about spirituality, but we're working towards talking about it in a more inclusive way. We're putting a focus on kindness and service, for example, and inviting rabbis and imams to speak. It can also be a place where we can just put the phones away and be still for a while."

## 2 Leadership

Head of School Steve Beatty didn't begin his career in education, but, once he switched over, he always assumed that his career would culminate at RSGC, his beloved alma mater. His father grew up on a farm in Ontario and his mother emigrated from England, so when they moved to Toronto the local private school scene was unknown to them. All they knew, he says, was that they were very impressed by a neighbour's boys. "They saw these really nice kids helping out around the house, calling my dad 'Sir' and being respectful to my mom," he says. "So, naturally, they asked what school they were going to in their blazers each morning. And that's how I ended up at RSGC from Grade 4 through 13. Our very best marketing has always been our boys."

Beatty started at the school in 1976, when the founding headmaster and many founding teachers were still on staff. His fond memories of those years were what eventually led him to a career in education. After university, he worked in magazine publishing in Toronto and abroad before reaching a point in his twenties where he reconsidered his path. "When I landed on teaching as a second career it had a lot to do with my sense that my teachers at RSGC really loved what they were doing," he says. "I was looking for a meaningful and substantive way to spend my professional life, and I looked to their example." His first job was at a private girls' school in Toronto, then he moved to a co-ed private school. "All through those years, my presumption was that I would return to RSGC, but

I didn't imagine I'd come back to run the place," he says. His two sons, set to graduate in 2022 and 2025, came with him.

Beatty readily acknowledges that, as a leader, he wears his heart on his sleeve. It's partly just the way he is, and partly very deliberate. His colleagues all attest to the warmth and care he shows not just students, but everyone he encounters. "Like any school leader, Steve has talents across the board," says Lambersky. "But his superpower is the way he connects with everyone he meets. He's an extraordinarily empathetic person. It seems that all of his decisions at RSGC are filtered through both his intellect and heart." Then there's the fact that Beatty is committed to walking the walk when it comes to the school's guarantee that boys will be "known and loved." "If we're going to talk about loving the boys, then we better act like we do," says Beatty. "That means I tell them I love them, but it also means I'm willing to have the tough conversations when needed."

He frequently tackles sensitive social topics in speeches, blogs, school magazine articles, and individual conversations. One of the subjects he's been addressing frequently in recent years is racism and the question of who feels like they belong at private schools such as RSGC that are grounded in a white Christian history. While boys from racialized communities attend the school, Beatty recognizes that there's still much work to be done. "I love RSGC, but I also acknowledge that we can and must do better," he says. "My sons also go to school here and I want their school to be even better than mine." This spirit of renewal and improvement also includes focusing on contemporary issues that specifically affect boys and being a role model in a society wrestling with the meaning of masculinity.

"Steve models how to be both strong and vulnerable as a community leader, but also as a man," says RSGC social worker Andrea Kaye. "We believe that talking about and understanding the concept of masculinity is an important part of learning in a single-gender school." The director of teaching and learning in the Senior School Mike Ruscitti echoes this sentiment, saying, "Steve not only talks about what it means to be a good man or boy. He also shows our students through his actions as principal."

## 3 Academics

The academic program is definitely challenging and designed for students who tend to be just that much more curious and driven to learn than their peers. There's an expectation that everyone will participate—to some extent—in music, the arts, public speaking, athletics, and outdoor education.

"In the earlier grades we concentrate on teaching the boys to collaborate, use their imagination, and think creatively in solving problems, while also, of course, solidifying their literacy and numeracy," says Beatty. "One of the things we like to say here is that our Junior School is the best preparation for our Senior School. We bring creative, critical thinkers into high school, where they delve deeply into subject content." Whether boys have a passion for science, business, or the humanities, there are enrichment opportunities at every grade such as the Advanced Computer Engineering School (ACES), entrepreneurial courses, co-curricular activities, and the AP Capstone program (see below).

Overall, though, RSGC focuses on relationships to drive student learning. "This is a key aspect of developing a sense of belonging and safety, which are crucial to academic success and growth," says Ruscitti. "We expose the boys to a lot of different subject areas and experiences in Grades 9 and 10, including entrepreneurship, media literacy, and solving problems through a thinking classroom approach. This allows them to make informed decisions about where to focus their studies in the upper grades." The students we

spoke to feel this approach worked for them. “I’ve always been torn between science and the humanities,” says one recent graduate. “RSGC allowed me to delve into both, which ultimately helped me decide which way to go in university.”

Some of the parents we spoke to say RSGC’s academic program is underrated compared to schools with the reputation of having the highest standards. “Before our son started, we were concerned that he might not be pushed enough,” says one parent. “We quickly realized there was no danger of that. It all comes back to the idea that the boys are known and loved. The teachers figure out where they need to be challenged, and the results are quite amazing.” According to one student, “if you’re excelling, teachers will most definitely give you extra work so that you can build on your skills even further.”

We saw evidence of strongly collaborative and supportive students. “There’s a collective pulling for academic excellence across the school,” says Ruscitti. “Of course we have awards that acknowledge academic success and these are sought after, but our culture emphasizes mutual support.” Students reaffirmed this, saying they felt challenged, not overwhelmed. “There isn’t an aggressive drive between students,” says one. “It’s definitely considered desirable to do well in school, but there’s a social aspect that’s woven into working on your courses that balances things out.” According to another: “There’s a healthy sense of competition because everybody wants to push each other to do better. But at no point is someone not going to help you because they don’t want you to do well.”

## Pedagogical approach

The promise that boys will be known and loved is especially evident in the strong teacher-student bonds at RSGC. One student we spoke to says it’s not uncommon for boys to seek advice from faculty on issues that extend beyond coursework. “The teachers

are always there for you. I feel like I can reach out to them about anything, from how to do an assignment to things that aren’t academic.” There was consensus among those we spoke to about the primacy of relational learning at the school, which simply means teachers focus on building strong relationships with students because they believe it’s the springboard for true learning.

This philosophy is backed up by plenty of research—not to mention the firsthand experience of the parents and students we spoke to. “It feels like the teachers are genuinely invested and interested in teaching us, which creates a culture of mutual respect,” says one graduating student. “The teachers, in my opinion, are one of the biggest reasons to go to this school.” Said another, “The best thing about RSGC is our teachers. They make every topic more interesting and they’re always willing to stay after school to help you.” On our tour, several of the boys seemed genuinely nostalgic as they took us through their old classrooms and reminisced about how great their teachers were.

The parents also attested to the strength of these relationships and their positive impact on the learning environment. “The RSGC teaching staff is really good at determining how each boy learns best and adjusting their instruction and expectations accordingly,” says one. “I’ve also found that many of the teachers know how to explain complex concepts in an interesting, big-picture way that hooks the boys.”

Pedagogically speaking, the approach is project and inquiry based learning, which are foundational in the school’s academic program. In practice, this looks like boys working in groups on presentations, inventing in the Design Engineering Studio, engaging in lively debates. In terms of curriculum design, it means breaking down traditional subject-based divisions such as math, language, and science to explore topics in a holistic way. “Instead of keeping those often-artificial barriers, we give students opportunities to look at big issues and ideas in a cross-curricular way,” says Beatty. “That way, they get to study things in a real-world context.”

While teachers across the school use these methods, the ones we spoke to agree that there's a lot of teacher agency at RSGC. "Our faculty isn't tied to just one or two teaching strategies," says Ruscitti. "We all have a ton of pedagogical tools at our disposal from ongoing professional development. The goal is always to make sure we're addressing the different needs in our classrooms." It's the same in the Junior School, says head Anna Magor. "The two qualities that all our teachers share is that they're loving and collaborative. We take a team approach to growing and refining our practice of teaching and the academic program."

As RSGC examines some of its traditions through the lens of equity, diversity, and inclusion, it's also looking at how teaching practices and course content can ensure that every boy sees himself in the curriculum at the school. "We have some really inspiring teachers who are critically assessing our pedagogy from this perspective," says Beatty. "We're never standing still in terms of pedagogy."

## Junior School

In each successive year from Grade 3 to Grade 8, RSGC prepares boys to be increasingly independent, collaborative learners. The physical teaching spaces, which recently underwent a four-year revitalization, support a teaching environment that encourages cooperation, creativity, and responsibility, says Magor. "We now have large, bright, open spaces with a lot of flex seating, so the boys can decide where they work best and when. There are bar stools at a high table, carpeted stadium seating, sofas, and spots where they can be on their own."

By Grade 8, the boys not only choose where they sit but also who they work with, what they work on, and when—with reasonable limits, of course. The whole curriculum revolves around integrated projects, where students learn crucial subject-specific knowledge and skills by exploring big issues and ideas that

transcend the usual divisions between disciplines. "The subjects are taught through the project itself," says Magor. "Students are the researchers, designers, developers, and presenters. With each passing grade, we give them more choices and independence within these projects."

The early grades focus on building and strengthening literacy and numeracy alongside learning skills such as collaboration. Everyone participates in community building activities a few times per week right through Grade 8. "It has a set of norms that the boys quickly come to know and follow," says Magor. "Everyone has the right to pass or participate and must demonstrate active listening, positive appreciation, and mutual respect. Put-downs are never tolerated. It's all about practising how to learn cooperatively." Ensuring boys' emotional well-being and teaching them how to respect others' feelings is central.

The enriched Ontario provincial curriculum is flexible and is responsive to issues and current events. "We're constantly adjusting the program in relation to what's happening in the world and our current students' strengths and challenges," says Magor. "Each year it's new and fresh because it's geared to the students who are there in front of us."

Music and art are integral to the Junior School curriculum. Between Grades 3 and 8 the boys explore vocal music and participate in band class. Art classes are closely linked to the curriculum, but the boys are encouraged to experiment in the weekly classes that explore clay, sculpture, painting, drawing and more in the light-filled art studio that boasts a view of the Annex neighbourhood.

A focus on STEM and design is evident throughout the Junior School programs. The grade three and four students are introduced to coding, robotics and the design cycle. By Grades 5 and 6 the boys get to start bringing their designs to life in the STEM Lab, where they can use the 3D-printer and learn skills such as soldering. "Design is integrated into every part of the program," says Magor. "The boys use digital tools for everything from coding and



animation to art and music. We still value the core skill of writing well, so we do daily writing, but we also recognize that we live in the 21st century and the boys have to know how to get their message across using all sorts of different kinds of apps and tools. So we give them increasing choice as they get older as to how they present their learning, whether it's on YouTube channels and podcasts or writing a letter to a community leader."

In Grade 7, the boys undertake a "Passion Project" on a topic they're interested in and work on it all year. The exercise draws on the independent learning skills they've acquired in the earlier grades while developing new ones in areas such as time management and research. In the end, they present their projects at a year-end showcase for parents and classmates. Magor says, "The whole process teaches boys about accountability, but it's also a lot of fun because they're digging into topics they're truly curious about."

The focus shifts from personal passion to social responsibility in Grade 8 with the year-long "Action Project." Students choose a pressing social issue—in past years they've examined homophobia, racism, sexism, and poverty—and research it thoroughly. Once they have a solid understanding of it, it's time to make a real-world connection, says Magor. "They find a charity working towards positive change on that issue, learn about what the organization does, and then make a pitch on why that organization deserves funding." In the end, a student-led panel of judges selects one team to win \$5,000 for their charity. It's part of the Youth and Philanthropy Initiative, a program aimed at high school students. When RSGC students began taking part in 2019, it was the first time Grade 8s had participated in North America, and RSGC was the first school to participate in the YPI project.

Another signature feature of the middle school is a discussion-based program modelled after the Harkness Method, which is essentially a roundtable exchange of ideas common in post-secondary humanities classes. Magor says "The boys take the lead in the discussion, with the teacher there to moderate. They're expected

to engage in thoughtful conversations where they use each other's names, make eye contact, and listen respectfully." It's just another way RSGC prepares good learners—and good people.

## Senior School

For boys who come up through the Junior School, Grade 9 continues to be a time spent acquiring and refining broad learning skills bears fruit. "This is when their collaborative abilities and critical thinking meet more subject-specific content," says Beatty. "Everything they do in Senior School is fed by the imagination and curiosity that we helped to develop in the earlier grades."

For a small school, RSGC offers a wide range of high school courses—more than 90 on average. Discovery of interests through a wide range of study is the focus in Grades 9 and 10, when the liberal arts approach mandates that boys take courses in arts, languages, and physical education. Starting in Grade 11, students begin differentiating their course selection from their peers by pursuing pathways tailored to engineering, computer science, arts, world studies, kinesiology, finance and economics, and health science. The offerings evolve each year in response to student needs and interests. "We've added more media arts courses recently, for example, and seen more boys following through into post-secondary programs in these areas," says Ruscitti. RSGC is also exploring options for offering joint online courses with other independent schools after a successful partnership with Trafalgar Castle School, an all-girls institution, in delivering a gender studies class during the pandemic.

"There are plenty of opportunities for boys seeking enrichment to go beyond the standard provincial curriculum in all the grades," says Ruscitti. Teachers offer various enrichment activities inside and outside the classroom for boys in the first two years of the Senior School, including extra research investigations and academic contests. RSGC students take part in multiple business, science, and



math competitions up to the international level. Co-curricular groups such as the Entrepreneurship Club, which runs multiple business ventures at the school, further enrich the curriculum. Students in Grades 9 and 10 can enrol in enriched courses in French and math, a stepping stone to the array of Advanced Placement (AP) courses in the senior grades.

The Senior School takes project-based learning to a whole new level in three programs that are either unique to RSGC or available in only a handful of Ontario schools: the Foundation Year Project, the Advanced Computer Engineering School (ACES) program, and the AP Capstone diploma program.

## Academic programs

### Foundation Year Project

Building on the Action Project in Grade 8, this Grade 9 RSGC tradition challenges boys to come up with a solution to a social issue within the school community, the Annex neighbourhood, or the larger Greater Toronto Area. It's an introduction to the concept of social entrepreneurship that asks students to use their knowledge and skills in a real-world application. "We invite three or four community partners to present genuine problems where they need help," says Ruscitti. "Small groups of students choose which problem they want to address, then spend the year researching all aspects of it. Part of this involves collaborating directly with the community organizations, which gives them valuable experience in the realities of working with clients and partners." Members of RSGC's alumni network and parent community offer partnership, assistance, and expertise in the projects.

There are no grades associated with the Foundation Year Project because the motivators and evaluators are external. At the end of the year, each group presents its solution to the community organization at a pitch night attended by RSGC students, faculty, and parents. "Standing in front of an audience and communicating your ideas is often much more motivating than marks," says Ruscitti. "The organizations judge the best solutions and often implement them in some way." In past years, ideas have ranged from a children's book on racism and an online educational hub for at-risk youth to options for improving access to clean water in Indigenous communities.

### ACES

The Advanced Computer Engineering School (ACES) program exists only at RSGC, offering boys in Grade 10 to 12 a project-based electrical engineering curriculum. Designed for students aiming for post-secondary study of software, electrical, or computer engineering, it's firmly rooted in maker/doer culture. There are no assignments or tests apart from the formidable task of taking an idea from concept and design through to building and execution.

"The ACES program is like no other that I've seen," says Tom Stevens, head of admissions. "Other schools have better robotics programs, no doubt, but this is far more all-encompassing in building students' knowledge and skills in design, coding, and hardwiring something and then producing a professional engineering report and presentation." For some RSGC boys, the ACES program is the deciding factor in choosing the school. One graduate, who had a custom printed circuit board named after him by program

founder and director Chris D'Arcy, says he was drawn to the autonomy D'Arcy gives his students. "There's so much freedom and creativity to create things on your own. It gave me a huge advantage coming into my university engineering program. I already had the practical skills, unlike a lot of my peers. It also helped me get on design teams in my internships."

All the ACES action takes place in the Design Engineering Studio, which is not the sleek, modern facility one might expect. Rather, it's a room with ample workspace surrounded by countless drawers and shelves housing every imaginable electronic component. The boys who conducted our tour were clearly proud of it, pointing out its wealth of resources. "It's not really cutting-edge compared to the facilities at some other schools," says Ruscitti. "What's impressive and what sets the ACES program apart is the depth and breadth of hands-on experience it offers."

The three-year program gets progressively more challenging, starting with the fundamentals of analog and digital circuits in Grade 10 and moving into microcontrollers in Grades 11 and 12. About half of students enrol in the first year, but only a fifth or so of the graduating class completes all three years to earn the ACES diploma and the "Hard Hat" award. Students told us even the introductory credit was one of the most challenging courses they'd ever taken, but agreed it was worth it. "Mr. D'Arcy is hard core, and he tells everyone that they'll get as much out of the course as they put in," says one. "I left with a curiosity about how our world of electronics works. Now I want to take things

apart, look at what's inside, and understand the processes. I never had that desire before."

### **AP Capstone**

While many of Toronto's independent schools offer Advanced Placement (AP) courses, just a few have the AP Capstone program: three girls' schools and University of Toronto Schools. Within the subset of boys' schools, Saint Andrew's College in Aurora is the only other place in Ontario apart from RSGC to offer the AP Capstone program.

Instead of teaching subject-specific content, these courses develop the skills that are crucial for success in university such as research, analysis, evidence-based arguments, academic writing, and presenting. "The program evolved out of the realization that, while many students scored well on the AP exams, this achievement often didn't translate into success at university," says John Lambersky, Head of Canadian and World Studies and director of the AP Capstone program at RSGC. "Students needed a better grounding in the broad skillset required for university-level study."

The two year-long courses are AP Seminar and AP Research. The first is a foundational course that develops and strengthens students' analytic and inquiry skills by exploring two to four relevant issues. "It's modelled on an undergraduate course," says Lambersky, who has a PhD himself. "Students learn to consider issues from multiple perspectives, identify the most reliable research, develop arguments, and communicate their findings with clarity."

There's no formal course content and no exams. The goal is simply to make students better readers, writers, and speakers. It gives them the abilities and confidence they need to join the academic conversation."

The second course, AP Research, goes one step further by allowing students to design, plan, and conduct a year-long research investigation of a topic of their choosing. It's modelled on a graduate-level course, and the result is a 4,000- to 5,000-word scholarly paper. Students describe it as a transformative experience. "It's a really incredible opportunity to get this exposure to the world of academic research and writing," says one student who just completed both AP Capstone courses. According to another: "I thought that I was a pretty good researcher before, but it completely changed the way I think about research and writing."

At least one-third of RSGC students take the AP Seminar course, while about one-fifth take AP Research. Still, says Lambersky, that's above average for schools that offer the AP Capstone program. "The credit goes to our boys' curiosity. The courses are entirely elective and we're very upfront in telling students that there will be a lot more work involved than in their regular courses. Also, although the courses are incredible preparation for university, they're not part of any admission requirements. They should be a hard sell, but students recognize their value and are willing to put in the effort."

RSGC, under Lambersky's leadership, launched a peer-reviewed research journal in 2016 called "The Young

Researcher" to publish the papers produced by AP Capstone students across North America. It's edited by secondary students—including, but not exclusively, RSGC boys—working closely with seasoned researchers. "The journal is indexed on Google Scholar and sometimes student papers get cited by mid-career academics," says Lambersky. "One RSGC student who examined concussions in the NFL even had his paper cited by The Washington Post—pretty amazing for a high school student." But there's no guarantee that RSGC students who submit their papers to the journal will get published. "It's a blind review process," he says. "Still, every student who completes AP Research has a summary of their paper displayed on the school's walls, because it's a significant accomplishment in itself."

### **Outdoor and experiential education**

RSGC delivers ample opportunities for boys to take their learning outside the classroom, whether it's to a camp a few hours north or across the globe. The outdoor education program is integrated in the curriculum from Grade 3 to Grade 11. To maximize the impact of the outings, there's pre- and post-trip planning, reflection, and assessment associated with every excursion. Senior School students can act as outdoor education leaders on the younger boys' trips if they attend a leadership retreat offered each spring.

The outdoor education program takes boys to camps and outdoor education centres across the province—and the country—in the final year. In Grades 3 and 4, the focus is on learning to be comfortable away from home for a short time. In Grades 5 and 6, the boys build confidence by venturing out of their comfort zone, even taking a short overnight canoe trip. The trips in Grades 7 and

9, which are entry points to RSGC for many students, take place at the beginning of the year and focus on community-building. In Grade 11 the boys head across the country to explore leadership development and outdoor adventure on Vancouver Island, B.C.

While the outdoor adventure program is compulsory, the RSGC global program offers optional exchanges and excursions for boys in Grade 7 to 12 seeking new experiences and language learning in national and international locations. There are exchanges available with partner schools in France, Scotland, and Japan (a sport exchange tied to RSGC's Judo program, see Athletics below). For shorter stints that promote language and cultural immersion, students have travelled to France, Guatemala, Ireland, and Japan.

### **Academic support**

RSGC takes a multifaceted approach to achieving its mission of helping every boy become the best version of himself. In the academic realm, this means ensuring there's support for every student in maximizing their potential. The library is home to the Learning Centre, which coordinates all academic support services. The Centre provides support to all students, whether they're top achievers or have documented learning needs. It all goes back to the school's commitment to know each boy, including their unique learning styles. Based on each student's individual learning strengths and needs, for example, Learning Strategies Support Services help them listen, read, comprehend, and study most effectively.

The Learning Centre also coordinates the peer tutoring program, which in fact goes beyond tutoring to include a broader mentoring component. Boys in Grade 10 to 12 pair with those in the lower grades for regular meetings where they might work on homework, read together, or just talk. One parent whose son was the co-head of the program before he graduated says it's an enriching

experience on both sides. "The younger boys learn so much from the older boys in terms of the school's values and culture, while the older boys learn about responsibility and leadership."

The boys we spoke to who have been tutors say the relationships they forged often lasted beyond the formal partnership. "We definitely help with assignments and studying, but it's more about fostering a friendship across the grades," says one. "RSGC is definitely a school that puts a lot of emphasis on leadership by example, and we take pride in that." Another tutor mentioned the mutual advantages: "Being able to learn how to teach is a really valuable skill that the school encourages."

When it comes time to apply to university, the school offers comprehensive university counselling services under the leadership of Ian Fleming. From university application workshops and individual counselling sessions to weekly Grade 12 meetings, students receive a wealth of information and guidance on their post-secondary options.



## 4

## Athletics and co-curriculars

Athletics are important at RSGC and, for a small school, it brings home more than its fair share of medals in certain sports. The boys we spoke to were keen to dispel the myth that, because RSGC is small and has fewer players to choose from, it doesn't perform well in sports. "We do just as well as our peer schools," said one student in Grade 12, pointing to the banners lining the hallway—including one recognizing his team's rugby championship.

Developing athletes have a better chance of securing a spot on one of the many competitive teams here than at bigger boys' schools, but there's still an element of high-level competition. Three-quarters of the boys are on at least one of the 35 competitive teams in 16 sports, while the others can opt for the rich intramural program that always sees a game going at breaks and lunchtime. Ball hockey is a big favourite. Participation on teams is optional across the board, though the school culture certainly encourages it. For those who aren't athletically inclined, there's still gym class every other day from Grade 3 to 10.

All of the coaches are teachers, which ensures that RSGC values of respect, kindness, and manners permeate the athletics program, says athletics director Steve Turner. "We're always reinforcing the character elements, whether we're in the classroom or on the field. The culture is inclusive on our teams in the earlier grades, which evolves into a stronger competitive focus in the Senior School when boys have to decide how much time and effort they want to devote to athletics."

In keeping with the school's commitment to boys' health and happiness, RSGC switched to a no-contact league for hockey. "We believe sports are so important to boys' development, but we were having too many students with concussions missing out on schoolwork," says admissions director Tom Stevens. "That's not the healthy balance we're striving for. We're now considering the same thing for rugby."

While RSGC teams cover the usual gamut of sports, the greatest competitive successes tend to be in individual sports. The alpine ski and volleyball teams recently won Conference of Independent Schools of Ontario (CISAA) championships, while 15 athletes qualified for Ontario Federation of Secondary Athletic Association (OFSAA) competition in cross-country running, skiing, and snowboarding.

There's also one unique offering to make note of: judo. Sensei David Miller is a full-time judo instructor and physical education teacher as well as the chief instructor at the neighbouring Annex Judo Academy. Under his leadership, RSGC has developed one of North America's most extensive school judo programs. Boys start learning the sport in Grade 3 as one part of physical education classes and can choose to take judo-specific classes beginning in Grade 10. There's also a judo club, and the school has its own dojo.

In terms of other facilities, they're certainly adequate. RSGC has a full-size gym and a patch of artificial turf big enough for the younger boys to play and the older ones to practice. The Fitness Centre, essentially a weight and cardio gym, certifies older students in safety practices so they can supervise younger boys. For everything else, there's an excellent facility either within walking distance or a short bus ride away. You'll find RSGC boys playing soccer at U of T's Varsity Stadium, hockey at Bill Bolton Arena, and running in High Park, for example.

RSGC is designed for boys who are keen to explore wide-ranging interests, not for those content to put in their time in the classroom and call it a day. "This is a school where it's cool to be in the

choir, be a peer tutor, be in an academic competition, or have any extracurricular involvement,” says one student. The school makes that easy by offering a wide variety of activities and being open to student-generated ideas. While school ends at 2:45 p.m., on the day we visited many boys were engaged in sports or clubs until 4 p.m.—something our tour guides said was typical.

Music groups—both choir and instrumental—are central to extracurricular life at RSGC. The students are effusive about the music program and genuinely proud of the school’s legendary Senior School jazz band, Dr. Death, which released a CD a few years ago. “If you’re into music, this is a good place to be,” says one clarinet player. Another, who plays the French horn, said it’s a “badge of honour” to be in the band. His peers agreed, noting that it’s part of the school’s culture of acceptance. “The respect that everyone has for each other’s interests and talents is one of the best qualities of RSGC,” says one. “There’s a belief that every boy has something he excels at, and it should be celebrated no matter what.”

We spoke to several students just before the annual club fair, which they seemed to be eagerly anticipating. One was carrying bristol board, which he explained was for a poster he planned to create for the Asian Affinity Club. “RSGC does a good job of respecting different cultures and religions by encouraging students to create clubs based on their interests and backgrounds if one doesn’t already exist,” he says.

There are more than 40 clubs in the Senior School alone, with over 200 participants. Beyond the usual fare, you’ll find a School of Rock, gamers’ union, stand-up comedy club, boxing club, music production club, and the ever-popular, time-honoured RSGC Ball Hockey League. Some clubs have an entrepreneurial bent, such as the ACES Fix-it Club, which repairs small appliances for a fee.

“I tried out everything I could,” says one recent RSGC graduate. “I was in rugby, drama, meditation club, the vinyl club—I can’t even remember them all. There’s a great balance at the school in terms of academics and extracurriculars. They give us a lot of

freedom and opportunity to spread our wings, and they push us out of our comfort zones.” Another student, who revamped the school newspaper and played saxophone in the jazz band, agrees. “There’s a huge emphasis on finding your passion and cultivating it.”

The parents we spoke to also appreciate the diverse outlets for learning—and having fun—beyond the classroom. “My son was very involved in sports, clubs, and leadership every year,” says one parent. “That’s why he got so much out of RSGC and loved every minute of it.”

Volunteering in the local community is part of every boy’s experience at the school, in every grade, and there are opportunities for international service learning in the upper grades. A Senior School teacher, Emma Totten, leads the school’s outreach initiatives as the Coordinator of Global Partnerships and Real-World Connections. “Our goal is to get our students out into the community and engaged with people, organizations and issues they might not otherwise have a chance to know and appreciate,” she says. “Service opportunities encourage the boys to connect with others outside their own life experience and see the world through different eyes.”

The school has longstanding relationships with several organizations, including St. Thomas’s Anglican Church, which runs the Friday Food Ministry dinner for individuals experiencing homelessness. Every week, several boys spend the afternoon prepping food and setting up the dining room. RSGC boys have also established strong partnerships with a nearby long-term care home, where they visit and share activities with seniors, and a public school, where they forge friendships as reading and math buddies.

In Grades 3 to 6, students work on class-wide activities to benefit the local community. In Grades 7 and 8, they must complete a minimum of 20 hours of community service through individual or small-group activities. By Senior School, volunteering is strongly encouraged beyond the mandatory 40 hours, with the exception of the annual Day of Service. The boys spend an entire day in

November at one of various charities across the GTA, with the hope that they will return there on their own throughout the year. Several service activities rely on parents and alumni to supervise.

For boys who want to extend their service learning further afield, RSGC offers international trips during March Break for students in Grade 7 through 12. Just like the academic program, these journeys are project-based. The community partners determine the projects, which could be helping to build homes or a school, and the students immerse themselves in the culture while gaining firsthand knowledge of the surrounding social, economic, and political issues.

## 5 Wellness

Boys' happiness, more than their success in any single area of school life, is the top priority at RSGC. It's a sentiment shared by everyone we spoke to, one that's linked to the conviction that when boys feel happy, safe, and comfortable, they can achieve their maximum potential. It's no surprise, then, that the school puts a strong focus on student wellness.

"Promising that we will know and love each boy is really a way of saying we're concerned about the whole student," says RSGC social worker Andrea Kaye. "Part of the RSGC education is understanding how to both struggle and succeed. The fact that our principal knows every student's name and wants to know about any challenges they're having demonstrates that mental health and wellness are central here."

Kaye delivers educational sessions related to boys' social and emotional development as part of the health curriculum, promotes school-wide awareness on well-being, and offers personal counselling to students and families. "My being present and visible in the daily life of the school normalizes counselling," she says. "Most of the students I see don't get referred. They come because they know they can and they want help or a place to discuss what's on their mind. At RSGC we're always talking about important ideas and concepts that affect adolescent boys' well-being. We maintain an open discussion in both formal and informal contexts." She cites some of the top issues as mental health, drugs and alcohol, sexuality,



masculinity, race, and privilege. According to one student, “the social worker is always there if you need to talk to an adult who’s not a teacher.” A full-time registered nurse is also on staff to support any concerns the boys might have about their physical health.

In our observations, openness defines the school’s approach to social and emotional health. Beatty never shies away from difficult conversations with students. “If I have the privilege of standing up in front of 450 boys every week or so, I better be prepared to take on the responsibility of addressing even the hardest stuff,” he says. “For example, with the older boys we literally went step-by-step through a fire drill of what to do in a situation where someone is about to be assaulted. We know they’re talking about these things with each other, and we can either embrace that and talk about it with them or pretend they’re not and ignore it.” The response from parents to this type of frank discussion, he says, is universally positive. “They’re grateful that we’re not sweeping these things under the table.” So are students. Says one, “It’s a very open, supportive environment where it feels like you can approach any teacher or staff member and speak to them about anything.”

Another key wellness resource is the Faculty Advisory Program, which assigns an advisor to each student in the Senior School. Advisory groups have boys from across the Senior School grades and meet regularly to discuss all aspects of school life. “It gives the boys a chance to have relationships with adults at the school built on trust,” says one parent. “Boys at this age need outlets beyond their parents for talking things out.” The students we spoke to say their advisory group meetings were highlights of their time at RSGC. “It was a great way to meet students from different grades, and the advisors really put in the time and effort to get what’s going on in your life,” says one.

The RSGC chaplain also counsels students on spiritual matters. On request, he links them to spiritual guides and counsellors in other faiths or traditions.

## 6 Student population

Creating a more diverse school is one of RSGC’s current priorities, as it is for most independent schools in Canada. Beatty is currently leading the whole school community in questioning how this can change. “We’re taking a hard look at which students feel like they belong here, why, and what might be standing in the way,” he says. “There’s a friction point between traditions and what we’ve always been, and what we aspire to be. That requires change. Our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee is deeply engaged in work with the purpose of ensuring that all students and staff experience safety, joy, and belonging here.” The leading strategy to diversify the student body is currently the financial aid program (see below).

The students we spoke to—several of whom were from racialized communities—say there’s a feeling of mutual support among RSGC boys. “It’s definitely an accepting environment,” says one recent graduate. “I remember in my first couple of days at the school in Grade 7 everyone would stop what they were doing to introduce themselves and ask if they could help.” Another says, “It’s the kind of place where social cliques aren’t prevalent and it’s easy to engage with students with common interests.”

Many of the boys said they had friendships across the grades, and even across the Junior and Senior Schools, fostered by extra-curricular activities and school-wide activities and events. “I think I know almost all of the boys at the Senior School,” said one Grade 12

student. “It feels like a family, even with the teachers. I ran into my old Grade 8 teacher today and it was like I never left his class.” On our tour, a new student in the Senior School was surprised to learn that a boy two years ahead of him already knew his name.

Student leadership roles within the RSGC community follow a distributed leadership model, which emphasizes shared responsibility and contribution to the school community’s mutual goals rather than hierarchy. There are plenty of opportunities for boys to take on leadership roles as tutors, coaches, and outdoor education leaders, in addition to more formal positions within the House system.

## 7 Getting in

Marks and aptitude alone aren’t enough to secure admission to RSGC. “We’re looking for boys who are open to learning in a lot of different ways and who will take advantage of all the experiences that we have to offer,” says Tom Stevens, director of admissions. “If they have zero interest in music or arts, for example, or if they don’t like the idea of community service, we won’t be a good fit. Given RSGC’s values around kindness and compassion, we’re also looking for students who are grounded, empathetic, and emotionally aware.” The admissions process is designed to assess character and extracurricular interests through separate interviews with parents and prospective students, along with confidential school reports from current or past teachers.

On the academic side, there’s an entrance test for boys entering Grades 3 through 12. It takes about 90 minutes to complete and assesses basic English and math skills, problem-solving, and creative writing. Stevens says the school is collaborating with other Toronto-area boys’ schools to create a joint test. “The aim is to streamline the applications and save kids from writing several tests,” he says. For boys applying to enter in Grade 3 through 6, there’s also an informal assessment during the interview that involves reading, writing, and math games. “The boys should leave never having known they were being evaluated,” he says.

There are plenty of opportunities to visit the school and get a sense of its look and feel, including tours, open houses and a

mini-curriculum night, where families can learn more about the academic programs directly from current students and teachers. The main entrance levels are Grade 3, Grade 5, Grade 7 and Grade 9 where the acceptance rates are approximately 60%, 20%, 60% and 40% respectively. These numbers are on par or just slightly higher than the leading Toronto boys' schools.

Tuition is comparable with similar schools in the city. Expenses not covered by tuition include the lunch program (there's full participation in the Junior School), Senior School textbooks, the after-school care program, computers, uniforms, sports tournaments, and trips. Since many students can take transit to school, RSGC offers discounted TTC tickets.

The annual fund aims for 100% participation among families, who can choose one-time, monthly, or multi-year gifts. Financial aid is available based on need, as assessed by a third-party organization, and there are a few merit-based scholarships for students entering in Grades 7 and 9. One, the Georgian Opportunity Fund, covers full tuition and all school-related expenses.

## 8 Parents and alumni

RSGC parents are keenly aware of the uniqueness of the Georgian culture. Just as Beatty credits the school's specialness to the indefinable qualities of its boys—described variously as manners, kindness, or courtesy—parents see their sons as being part of a distinct community. “There's a common pride among parents in knowing that RSGC boys have a reputation for character traits that we all strive for in ourselves and our kids,” he says. “This creates a natural affinity.”

At a formal level, the Georgian Parents' Guild fosters community among parents and builds connections with the school. A core group of volunteers organizes coffee mornings, Grade Parent socials, workshops and speakers, and fundraising initiatives. There are also plenty of volunteer opportunities for parents who don't have the time or inclination to invest more than an occasional hour. Calls for volunteers go out in school emails and announcements with links to a digital volunteer management portal.

RSGC's goal is to create lifelong Georgians who not only maintain solid ties to the school but uphold Georgian values. Judging by the students and grads we spoke to, these connections and loyalty run deep. “I've heard about a lot of boys who've reached out to their RSGC advisors for insight and advice when they're having difficult times later on, whether it's with their university studies or personal issues,” says one recent grad. “Mr. Beatty also stays in touch with a lot of the grads.” He doesn't just send an occasional email or call up

former students, however. He actually travels to the main university towns in Ontario every year to visit Georgians. “I’ve even gone to England and Scotland to see our boys,” says Beatty. “I take them out for chicken wings and ginger ale—or that’s what I tell them we’ll have—and we just chat. I like to check up on them, make sure they’re not too skinny and they’re going to class. Truthfully, I also just miss them.”

Apart from this very personal effort to sustain alumni connections, the RSGC Alumni Association nurtures lasting relationships through speakers’ series, mentoring opportunities, and special events such as the beloved “Hidden Gems” evening, where members of the Georgian community showcase their artistic talents in the school’s Black Box Theatre to raise funds for an arts scholarship.

The number of grads who opt to send their sons to RSGC continues to grow by the year, aided in part by the needs-based financial aid provided by the Next Generation Georgian Fund. A “Legacy Breakfast” of alumni and their sons now takes place each year.

## 9 The Takeaway

RSGC holds a unique spot in Toronto’s private school landscape as the smaller, perhaps lesser-known boys’ school next to Crescent School, St. Michael’s College School, and Upper Canada College. Head of School Steve Beatty, an RSGC graduate himself with two sons at the school, says that the “underdog quality” is one of RSGC’s biggest strengths. “We can’t compete with the others with respect to facilities, size, endowment, history, etc. Instead, we have a sort of specialness that’s our biggest secret. It’s hard to articulate, but it’s partly about humility and mostly about our students just being good guys. There’s such intentionality around families bringing their boys here, largely because of what they’ve seen in our students—good young men who do the right thing.”

As one former student puts it, the school “turns out young men who are confident and comfortable in their own skin, but not arrogant.” Students are aware of their reputation and own it proudly. “RSGC does a great job in preparing you for your future life in academia and your career, but it also prepares you to be a good person,” says one recent graduate. “Our unofficial motto, Manners Maketh Men, sounds old-fashioned and gentlemanly, but it still holds a lot of value. It’s less about mechanical manners like holding doors open than about fundamental respect in all your interactions.”

The leadership is, frankly, as good as it gets. The administration rightly sees the long-standing traditions as a valuable aspect of the life of the school, though is also adept at developing the programs

and curricular offerings to meet the needs of the students and the families that turn to the school today. The choral program remains very strong, and rightly so, though is part of a very broad range of extracurricular programs.

The academic program is rigorous in the sense that it seeks to challenge students, though rigorous, too, in the sense that it intends that students have experience across the disciplines, while also appreciating the connections between them. Strong teacher-student relationships are at the heart of RSGC's pedagogical approach, but the value placed on relationships goes beyond this dynamic to encompass the whole school environment. According to one parent who sits on the school's board of directors, his son picked up on that atmosphere after just one visit. "He's a very relationship-oriented kind of kid, and by observing the interactions between everyone he sensed that it would be right for him," he says.

Consistent with the school's mission of helping boys become the best version of themselves—to become true "Georgians," as community members call themselves—RSGC strives for a holistic education that includes academic, athletic, social, moral, and spiritual growth. "We have a focus on balance," says Tom Stevens, director of admissions. "Our boys are involved in the music program from Grades 3 to 8. They take part in outdoor education. And we ask them to be engaged in community service, sports, and leadership." This isn't the school for boys with single interests to the exclusion of everything else. There's a wide and diverse array of extracurricular activities, and the athletics program stresses inclusivity.

In all of that, this is a very easy school to love, as parents, students, and alumni will readily tell you. It's a quiet, great school that perhaps should be better known, but doesn't necessarily mind if it isn't. The ideal student is one looking to reach his academic potential while engaging with others within a supportive, caring community.



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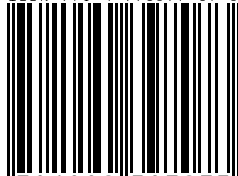
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“Underpinning everything at RSGC is the belief that when boys feel cared for and happy, they learn well.”

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