

INFORMATION FOR FIRST YEAR PARENTS

Welcome to the RLA community.

As a parent new to the school, we're sure you have some questions. This handout will address some of the most common questions parents of new students have. The best source of more detailed information for parents is The Parents Handbook which contains information on many of the Academy's systems, policies and procedures. A copy of the handbook has been provided to you and is also available on our website.

The Academy's Schedule of Events outlines the various events here at RLA including semester start and end dates, exams and the opportunities students have to leave campus for each semester (Stand Downs). It is provided so that families can plan travel, schedule medical and dental appointments and coordinate family functions for when students will be at home.

All students are required to adhere to the dates and timings provided in the Schedule of Events. The Academy will not approve early dismissals or late returns as a means to extend a Stand Down or Leave. Please contact the Communications Office (communications@rla.ca) if you wish to discuss the requirements for a compassionate leave for an important family/religious occasion. Maintaining these dates is important to the program and a necessary support for our students.

The highly structured system at RLA is upheld as a means of promoting accountability for one's actions and motivating each young man to reach his full potential. Students who engage in inappropriate behaviour may be required to do physical training (push-ups, run laps, jumping jacks, mountain climbers, knee bends, etc) or complete a form of community service around the campus. Other infractions of rules may lead to demotion in rank or loss of weekend leaves and other privileges. The Academy does not condone or use corporal punishment.

Similarly, this system also recognizes personal achievement through promotions in rank and awards. Each week throughout the academic year, students have the opportunity to earn awards in several categories. The White Belt is awarded to the student who has worked diligently and achieved the best weekly scores for the condition of his kit in the Company or has made significant improvement with his kit. A Best House recipient is the house within a Company who has the best inspection scores and puts forth a strong effort on White Glove Inspection. The Athlete of the Week has displayed a positive attitude, strong effort and good sportsmanship during physical training, performance objectives or sports. The Student of the Week has worked to his potential in the classroom and achieved success in an area of difficulty. The Citizen of the Week has gone above and beyond normal duty to lend help and assistance to other students and displays genuine concern for others. Recommendations for these awards are made by staff. Pictures of Award recipients are posted on our Facebook page. Individual awards are recorded on the Cadet Service Record.

At the conclusion of the academic year, each student is provided with a Cadet Service Record which outlines promotions, awards, training, community service and major discipline (Academic Charge, Company Commander's Charges, or Headmaster's Charge.). The Cadet Service Record is designed for students to use (if they wish) as a reference for summer employment applications or for admission to camps or other academic institutions. **The Cadet Service Record is designed to act as reference and therefore the Academy does not provide personal references or complete reference forms.**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION

1. What happens during my son's first week?

During the first week of school students take part in recruit training. The purpose of recruit training is to fully equip each new student with the necessary skills to navigate Academy expectations for proper conduct both in and out of the classroom, treatment of others, etiquette, self-care and routine, time management and basic organization routines.

The following is a brief outline of the training during your son's first week. While all recruit sessions are provided the daily schedule may change year-to-year.

Day 1

Students are issued Kit (their school uniforms and supplies) and helped to label their belongings. They move into the Recruit Barracks, learn Mess Hall etiquette and are introduced to the evening routine.

Day 2

Students take part in several clinics on bed making, the discipline code, performance objectives, the rank structure and chain of command at RLA, procedures for medication, and building identification. They also learn about RLA policies (bullying, complaints, redress, letter writing), how to write a letter and address an envelope and the barracks routine. Day 2 is also when students are introduced to physical training.

Day 3

Students continue clinics on daily routines as well as taking care of their kit and start to learn about inspection and drill as well as extracurricular clubs, leaves, the history and values of RLA and sports. They continue physical training.

Day 4

Students take part in the morning routine and inspection, practicing those lessons, continue learning drill and start to discuss how to make appointments with RLA staff (nurse, academic advisor, counselling), and continue physical training. This is also the first day of classes.

Day 5

While students continue to practice morning routine and inspection and other lessons they've learned, they also begin training for The Fall Exercise and are introduced to the weekend routine.

Day 6

Students continue the daily routines, review the information they've learned for the recruit and drill test and discuss expectations of the Academy. Staff also use this time to "debrief" each new student, assessing their strengths and weaknesses. New students are assigned a recruit "buddy" and they move into regular barracks with all returning students.

Day 7

While all new students will continue practicing and learning all of the lessons from recruit training, today they are in the classroom and participating in all regular daily routines.

2. When will I receive confirmation of my son's academic timetable (For parents with boys in B or C Company Only)?

The Academic office will email your son's academic timetable during the first week. Please contact academics@rla.ca if you have any questions concerning academics.

3. When will I receive letters from my son?

Letters are written on weekends and mailed early the following week. The Academy ensures that each student writes at least one letter home each week. It may take up to one week for his letter to arrive. If you have concerns about the content of your son's letter(s), please contact the communications office at communications@rla.ca.

4. Is my son allowed to receive packages from family or friends?

Packages are allowed, however we discourage parents from sending them because most items sent from home will be considered contraband, including food, music and clothing items. Upon promotion to the rank of Cadet, students are allowed to have in their possession appropriate reading material and family pictures. Although Academy staff members do not open incoming letters to students, any envelopes or packages that may contain contraband items are opened in the presence of a staff member. Please do not send "care packages". Any items that are considered contraband will either be stored temporarily at the Academy or returned home at the student's expense.

5. How often can I write letters to my son?

We recommend that you write at least one letter per week, but discourage daily letters. It is important for you to know that, at times, letters will cross paths in the mail system. As such, you may receive a letter asking why you have not written. Students receive their mail the evening of the day it arrives. We do not withhold letters from home. The Academy's address is 6727 South Chippawa Road, Wellandport, Ontario LOR 2J0. Please ensure that you include your son's name on the envelope.

6. Can I send emails to my son?

We prefer that all correspondence to your son be mailed. Due to the volume of email correspondence that is received daily the Academy will only print one letter, not more than two pages in length, per week from parents or guardians only. Staff will not print pictures. Also note, because staff are printing the letters we cannot guarantee privacy although we do strive to ensure all letters to students are private. Emails can be sent to studentmail@rla.ca

7. When will my son be promoted to Cadet?

Each recruit must meet a number of performance objectives in order to be eligible for promotion. All performance objectives are addressed in the first week's training. The first opportunity for promotion is approximately four weeks after enrolment date. Promotions take place each Tuesday. Students who are not promoted are counselled by staff on a regular basis in order to help them work towards Cadet status.

8. When will I receive my first telephone call?

Weekly telephone calls will commence when your son is promoted to Cadet. He will inform you of his "call night" during his first call home.

9. What is the Fall Exercise?

The Fall Exercise is a challenging, team building 60 km "march" through the Niagara Peninsula over the course of three days. The training for this event is ongoing and starts during the initial phase of recruit training. The final day involves completing 22 km before arriving at Queenston Heights where a parade is held.

10. What do I need to know about the First Stand Down?

The first Stand Down when students are eligible to leave campus is traditionally the Canadian Thanksgiving (for students who start later in the Semester the first leave opportunity is approximately four weeks after their start date). Each student will receive a Monitored Leave package which we ask that all parents complete. This is simply a journal about your son's activities while at home as well as his attitude. It is used to gauge how well your son is adjusting to the schedule and expectations of the Academy and whether changes are necessary in his specific program.

Each student will be assigned homework (approximately 2 to 2 1/2 hours per day). Homework not completed to Academy standard will result in an Academic Charge and potential loss of rank and privilege for the 1st offence and may result in the loss of the next Stand Down for 2nd and subsequent offences of not completing homework to Academy standard.

Parents should expect their sons to continue to follow the Academy routine and expectations as closely as possible while at home. This makes it much easier for them to return to the school's routine after a Stand Down and reinforces what they are learning at the Academy.

All students are expected to return in the RLA civilian approved clothing and on time.

11. How do I communicate with the Academy? How do I know my son is okay?

The Academy office hours are Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., excluding Canadian statutory holidays. The Academy can be reached at 905-386-6203 or via email.

Academics, Ms. Leoni – academics@rla.ca

Accounts, Mr. Determann – accounts@rla.ca

Communications, Ms. Lake – communications@rla.ca

Admissions/administration, Mrs. Crescenzi – admissions@rla.ca

If there is an emergency and you must speak to a staff member outside of office hours, please call 905-386-6203, dial extension 600, and leave a message with the purpose/details of your call. The emergency mailbox is checked on a regular basis and the appropriate staff member will respond.

The Academy sends a weekly newsletter to parents during the academic year called Academy Briefing. This newsletter will include information and photos about student activities in all areas of campus life.

We are also on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/robertlandacademy>) where you will find photos and updates about Academy happenings.

It is our hope that the above information will be helpful to you as your son adjusts during the first weeks in his new environment. The Academy will forward further information – as appropriate or required - during the upcoming weeks and months. However, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call or email the Academy.