



14<sup>th</sup> December 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

## Principal's Update – Autumn Term 10

### *Attendance*

I am proud that in spite of the disruption caused by illness, suspected illness and self-isolation this term, students have been keen to attend school. Even though we have had days with more than 10% of our teachers absent and we have been required to identify groups of students to self-isolate on a number of occasions, we have remained open for all “bubbles” every day and have not (yet!) needed to revert an entire “bubble” to remote learning. Thank you to everyone who has helped us to achieve this – it really has been a whole community effort. Every teaching day is valuable, so continued good attendance (unless unwell), right up to the end of term, is the expectation for all.

### *Year 7 Parents Evenings*

Thank you to parents of Year 7 students who met with teachers virtually at these events this week. Despite the unusual circumstances of their transition to secondary school, they have enjoyed a very successful first term at the Collegiate and will, from the start of next term, move into ability-based [teaching groups](#) (details of which will be on Parent Portal before the end of this week). Having spent this term settling in with their Tutor Groups, these new teaching groups will facilitate learning and accelerated progress at all levels.

### *Leadership of Orion College*

I am pleased to announce the appointment of Mr Thomas Harriott to the post of [Headteacher, Orion College](#). Mr Harriott, who joins us as an experienced senior leader in the Harris Federation, was able to spend some time at the Collegiate last week and has started to meet staff and students already. He is looking forward to joining us at the start of next term, until when Mr Vass will continue in his dual role.

### *End of Term & Contact Tracing*

As outlined in [my last update](#), this Friday, 18<sup>th</sup> December 2020 will be the last day of term. It will be a non-uniform day and students are asked to donate £1 to charity (collected during the week). Students should ensure that they empty their lockers before the end of term and Year 11 students, in particular, should check that they have everything they need to help them with revision for [Mock Exams](#) which will begin on the first day of term. Years 7-9 will be dismissed at 12.10pm and Years 10-13 will be dismissed at 1.00pm.

Whilst I hope that everyone will remain well over the Christmas break, our responsibility to support contact tracing will continue beyond the end of term. **Therefore, if a student develops the symptoms of coronavirus in the 48 hour period since he/she was last in school, please let us know immediately by email to [admin@riddlesdown.org](mailto:admin@riddlesdown.org)** and arrange a test, confirming the outcome (again by email) as soon as possible. If necessary, we shall then identify close contacts from the relevant day(s) and reluctantly inform them of the need to self-isolate. Whilst I recognise that this may cause upset over the Christmas break, I hope that everyone will understand that we

will simply be fulfilling our civic responsibility by sharing this important information – we all hope that we will not need to do this!

If a student develops symptoms more than 48 hours since he/she was last in school and subsequently tests positive, please let us know, even though there will be no need to trace contacts in school.

*Looking Forward to 2021*

Over the weekend, I have appreciated reading the many messages from parents, thanking our team for their efforts over the course of this incredible term and unprecedented year. I will be pleased to share them with colleagues this week. What is clear from the messages is that, despite the changes to our operation, despite the restrictions to our work, despite the anxiety that has inevitably built whilst living through a pandemic, the quality of our pastoral care and our relentless focus on people and learning have remained unchanged and have been central to our “recovery” and rebuilding of our outstanding school.

The new term will begin on Monday, 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021. As we happily put this year behind us, I wish everyone a safe and restful Christmas break and I look forward to our community’s good health and happiness in the new year.

With very best wishes,

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sounick Dey', written in a cursive style.

Mr S Dey  
Principal