



12th February 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

Principal's Update – Spring Term 6

In the week that would traditionally have been “showtime” at the Collegiate, we have been reminded of the many fantastic opportunities that students would ordinarily enjoy in music, drama, performance, creativity and sport that have sadly been curtailed by the pandemic. We know how important these activities are, alongside the outstanding learning that takes place in classrooms and at home each day. Our vast extra-curricular programme of weekly activities and educational trips and visits form a key part of what makes our school special – and it was reassuring to hear [Sir Kevan Collins](#), the newly appointed education recovery commissioner, talk positively this week about the role of the arts and sport in helping young people to move forward. I often say that the reason we *can* offer such an impressive programme at Riddlesdown is because of our size, but the reason that we *do* offer it is because we recognise its value in helping our students to develop wider skills and qualities which, together with excellent academic qualifications, enable the greatest success at and beyond school and provide superb preparation for the excitement and challenges of the future. I was pleased to see a large number students getting involved in virtual extra-curricular activities week – I hope more will join them after half term – but I know that these will not be the same as our usual offer and we are desperately looking forward to restoring all that we previously enjoyed and building on it as soon as we can. In the meantime, students are encouraged to #becreative and #beactive through virtual participation and in their own ways.

Parent Governor Vacancies

We are grateful that two of our Parent Governors, Cathryn Marsden and Dawn-Erika Williams, have agreed to remain on the Local Governing Body (LGB), even though their children have now grown and left the Collegiate. I am pleased that the Trust Board has confirmed their appointment as Trust Governors and we, consequently, have two vacancies for current parents to join the LGB as Parent Governors. Please see my [letter](#) sent yesterday for further details.

Year 9 Options

Over the course of next half term, students in Year 9 will be supported in making their course choices for Key Stage 4. Mr Osborne, Deputy Principal, has [written](#) to parents initially today with further details to follow. Key dates will be the virtual Year 9 Parents Evening on 2nd March 2021 and the virtual Year 9 Options Evening on 11th March 2021.

Year 11 Parents Evening

Teachers are looking forward to speaking with Year 11 students and their parents at this virtual event on 23rd February 2021. Please note Mr Vass' comments about the [nature of the discussions](#) that we expect to hold and email parentsevening@riddlesdown.org if you have any queries.

Exam Entries

Although public exams will not take place this summer, entries still need to be made so that students may be awarded qualifications. This week, Miss Ogunseye, Head of Centre, [wrote](#) to all students who were due to take public exams this summer, asking them to check their statement of entry carefully. Any arising concerns or queries should be directed to [Sarah Church](#) by Wednesday 17th February 2021.

Responses to Last Week's Survey

Thank you to everyone who responded to the short survey that we published last week.

- 95% of respondents indicated good engagement with live lessons, with 94% agreeing that live lessons were interactive
- 84% of respondents indicated good engagement with non-live lessons, with 84% agreeing that tasks were suitably challenging
- Only half of respondents agreed that the time spent at a computer was not excessive – clearly each family will have its own circumstances and opinion, but with such a split view, this makes it difficult to suggest changes that would benefit a majority
- Overall, 90% of respondents indicated that they were happy with the provision of Remote Learning and many took the opportunity to share messages of appreciation – thank you very much for your encouragement

Whilst 80% of respondents felt that their child is making good progress whilst at home, unsurprisingly, just under half of respondents indicated that their child's level of engagement with Remote Learning was similar to their usual level of engagement at school – further confirmation, if we needed it, that despite our very best efforts, for many students, Remote Learning cannot adequately replace the rich learning and social experiences that they are able to enjoy when in school.

We look forward to news after half term which we hope will confirm a full return to school soon but, in the meantime, I would like to thank all parents for their incredible efforts over the last six weeks in supporting their children with Remote Learning, often whilst trying to juggle working from home themselves and trying to maintain their own wellbeing and sanity! We would all – students, parents and teachers – prefer for school to operate as normal, but at the Collegiate, we know that any detrimental impact of lockdown on learning has been lessened due to the fantastic support that our students receive from their families.

I hope that everyone can take a rest over half term whilst the Collegiate will be closed next week. Remote Learning and on-site provision for vulnerable students and the children of key workers will resume on Monday, 22nd February 2021 (Week B).

Yours sincerely



Mr S Dey
Principal