



10th February 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

Spring 1 Updates

As this half term comes to an end, I reflect on what has been an incredibly busy and purposeful start to 2023. Our Year 10 students were an absolute credit to their families and to our school last month as they displayed maturity in their approach to their Careers Interviews. It was nice to see them in their own smart dress and the team of volunteers who interviewed our students gave overwhelmingly positive feedback about their ability to converse, their individuality and their confidence in answering questions. Our Year 7 students have embarked on the *Instrumental Project* this half term. This saw us achieve success in receiving funding for musical provision, enabling every student in Year 7 to learn an instrument in their Music lessons. The annual school production took place this week, in which our cast performed *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* to audiences over the course of this week. We welcomed Year 6 pupils from local primary schools to enjoy the first performance before four nights of the show were performed. The talent, teamwork, commitment and reliance of the cast, crew and team of staff was phenomenal. The standard of this performance was awe inspiring, with audiences remarking on their disbelief that they were sitting in a school hall and not the West End! I would like to thank staff, students and families for every contribution that enabled such an incredible show to be produced. As I said last night at the end of the final performance, these are the moments that stay with us for a lifetime and remind us of the importance of community and partnership.

Leaders of Tomorrow

Previously, I commented on our school motto, '*Learners of today. Leaders of tomorrow*', and how this plays a crucial part in the life of our school. In a long line of Riddlesdown Alumni who have gone on to be leaders in a range of industries and professions, the Riddlesdown Community were full of pride last month when ex-student David Ozoh became the youngest Premier League debutant for Crystal Palace Football Club. David joined Riddlesdown in 2016 as a member of Pegasus College. He was part of the Riddlesdown football team who, while they were in Year 9, won the National Cup Final. David joined Crystal Palace at the age of 8, received a scholarship at 16 and this year signed a 5-year contract with the club. David's success is remarkable, and it is the comments that staff make about him which are such a testament to his young success. Mr Langan, who worked closely with David while he was a student, said, "*His dedication, commitment and aspiration to succeed were exemplary. David always showed gratitude for every opportunity he had – he is one of the humblest students I have ever met and has worked hard in everything he ever did*". What a fantastic example to our students and of our VALUES.

Industrial Action

Thank you to students and families for your patience and support with our arrangements for the industrial action last week. The second planned day of strikes is due to take place on Thursday 2nd March. Please note that the Virtual Year 9 Parent's Evening has now been rearranged from this date and will now take place on Wednesday 1st March instead. I am now making arrangements for the 2nd March and will provide full plans during week beginning 20th February. Since Year 10 and 11 students will be sitting mock exams during the early part of March, current plans for 2nd March should include mock exams to take place for these year groups. Students, parents and carers of Year 10 and 11 students will have received notification of the planned exam timetable and will see that there is a requirement for them to attend school on 2nd March for specific exams. Please make note of this. Exact times and arrangements for the rest of the day will be confirmed after half term and students, parents and carers of other year groups will be notified of arrangements for their education then too.

Charity Contributions

At the end of the Autumn Term, students made a charitable contribution in return for mufti dress. Each College has therefore been able to make a charitable contribution of £800 thanks to those donations. This week, coinciding with colleges making their choices of the charity to which their donation should be made, we have been shocked and saddened by the tragic earthquake in Syria and Turkey. Colleges have therefore decided to donate most of this money to [Turkey-Syria earthquake appeal | British Red Cross](#) and contributions from Phoenix to [Ar Rihla Project | Ar Food Project | AR Projects](#) and [Cleft Lip & Palate Association \(clapa.com\)](#). My sincere thanks to families and students for making these donations and enabling us to contribute charitable donations to such important causes.

Holocaust Memorial

A group of students represented Riddlesdown on Friday 27th January at the Holocaust Memorial Day Ceremony at Croydon Town Hall. Following the event, I received emails from the organisers praising the students for their “heartfelt and beautifully spoken” contributions. Thank you to teacher Miss Mayne for arranging their participation and to students, Joanna Oyedele (9AAW), Dionis Vani (9RPD), Thanai Ollivierre (9RPD), Jake Sheehan (9RAC), Issabelle Bah (9RPD), Harvey Drummey (9AAW) and Sidney Patrick (12CES – violinist) for representing yourselves and the Collegiate so impressively.

Standards and Expectations

Thank you to students and parents for supporting with improvements to punctuality. Mr Vass [wrote](#) at the end of the Autumn Term to outline our approach and I am pleased now to see improved punctuality at the start of the school day. In addition, we continue to strive for high standards of uniform and appearance. Please take the half term as an opportunity to ensure uniform is correct at the start of the next half term. Uniform requirements can be found [here](#). Please note, students should wear black shoes and not trainers, unless during a PE lesson. Please send any uniform that is no longer needed to school on the first day back and there will be a member of staff collecting this uniform in the student entrance from 8.00am. In particular, blazers and PE are required to support families.

Safeguarding Briefing

It has come to our attention via the Safer Schools Team and Croydon Local Authority that there have been a number of mobile phone thefts involving teenagers in the Croydon area in recent days and weeks. It is widely known that theft of personal belongings, or ‘mugging’ as it is commonly known, is more likely when an individual has a mobile phone which is obvious or visible. Of course, as I do with my own teenage children, we want to be able to make contact with our children and for them to be able to use important apps which help us to identify their location or other crucial needs; so, we encourage them to have their phones on their person. Please, over half term, when your children are away from home or without an adult, remind them of the importance of keeping their phones safe and away, preferably out of sight. When they need to use phones, give them advice about how and when to do this, such as in busier places, near or in shops and downstairs on the bus. In addition, reminding them of the importance of being in groups, thinking *safety in numbers* is a good way to remind them of how to keep themselves safe over school holidays.

Yours sincerely

Mrs K Turner
Principal