



21st July 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

A final Message

As we reach the end of my year as Principal at Riddlesdown, I reflect on the incredible achievements we have experienced. To name all of these would be impossible but, to reference a few, I am incredibly proud of the success of the Instrumental Project in Year 7, the incredible student leadership body in College VI, the phenomenal programme of wider opportunities, the exceptional curriculum development work and the recognition from OFSTED. Whilst I am looking forward to returning to my post as Director of Education for The Collegiate Trust, I will be sorry to be losing the daily connection with the Riddlesdown community. It has been a true privilege to be the Principal, and I have been enormously grateful for the support I have received from the talented team of staff, the wonderful students and the supportive parents.

At the start of the year, I set out my three aims: to be ambitious, to focus on improvement – a little bit better every day – and to look after people. I am so proud of the ways in which staff have risen to and met these aims collectively. Thanks to the legacy of years of exceptional practice and leadership at Riddlesdown, we have been able to achieve great success this year.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish Dr Parimal Bhatt every success as he takes over the leadership of Riddlesdown Collegiate. Over the past half term, I have been working closely with him to ensure he has a smooth start to the year, and, in my post next year, I will continue to support the quality of education and leadership of the school. Dr Bhatt will have the support of an exceptional Senior Leadership Team and an incredibly talented wider staff team. Despite the recruitment and retention challenges the Education Sector faces, we have a full and comprehensive staff team ready to continue the exceptional education at Riddlesdown next year.

As usual at the end of an academic year, we shall be saying goodbye to a number of colleagues – some are relocating, some are moving into promoted posts and others are looking to expand their teaching and leadership experience. We thank them for their contribution to the work of the Collegiate and wish them the very best of luck for their future.

In particular I would like to mention two colleagues from the Senior Leadership Team and a colleague from the support team who have made an incredible contribution to the success of the Collegiate.

- Miss Philippa Bigden started her career with us as a new teacher in 2009. In her 14 years at Riddlesdown, Miss Bigden has been an integral part in the development of the exceptional quality of education that we deliver. She is an outstanding practitioner and has made a significant impact on the quality of professional development that staff enjoy. Miss Bigden is now leaving her post as Assistant Principal but is not going far; I am pleased to say that she is staying in The Collegiate Trust family and will begin her post as Deputy Principal at Woodcote High School in September. Mr Andrew Cameron will take up his post as Assistant Principal, Teaching & Learning in September.
- Mr Mike Smith joined College VI as Headteacher in September 2016. His leadership of our sixth form provision has been exceptional. In the time that he has been College VI Headteacher, he has led and overseen a huge growth in student numbers, courses and opportunities, a complete renovation of the facilities and an annual improvement in outcomes. In addition, this year he led College VI to the *outstanding* judgement during our recent inspection. Mr Smith now moves into his new post as Director of School Improvement, Post-16 for The Collegiate Trust where he will oversee the quality of provision in the Trust's four post-16 provisions. Mr Weeks will take up his post as College VI Headteacher in September.

- Mrs Sue Buckley has worked at the Collegiate for 26 years as part of the Catering Team. She now begins her well-deserved retirement with much needed time to travel to visit family around the world. Not only has Mrs Buckley kept our large staff team well-fed and watered, she has done so with kindness and warmth. She has a unique way of looking after people and will be sorely missed by us all.

Summer Activity

Over the summer work will continue to refurbish the Student Diner facilities. In September, students will benefit from the upgraded facility with more seating space and greater efficiency in food service. Thank you for the patience demonstrated this week while we had to limit food options.

We look forward to seeing students to collect their exam results on 17th August 2023 (A Levels) and 24th August 2023 (GCSEs) – specific details have been sent already.

In the local area, gas main repair work will be resumed for the duration of the six-week holiday. In particular, this will affect Dalegarth Gardens. Thank you to the Riddlesdown Residents Association who have been overseeing the plans and corresponding with the project manager to ensure that local signage is helpfully directing traffic. This work is due for completion before the start of the new term.

Start of Term Arrangements – September 2023

The first day of term for students will be **Tuesday 5th September 2023**. Students should come to school at the following times:

Year 7	8.30am – 2.45pm
Years 8 – 11	9.30am – 3.00pm
Years 12 & 13	10.30am – 3.00pm

From **Wednesday 6th September 2023**, all students should attend school at the usual times of **8.30am – 3.00pm**.

All students should return in full school uniform and fully equipped for lessons. Parents are advised to ensure that ParentPay accounts are topped up in advance so that students can make purchases from The Diner, The Cube and/or the College VI Café.

As we move into the summer break, I would like to thank you for your support and hard work. I hope that the holiday brings you an opportunity to reflect, to rest and to recuperate.

Yours sincerely



Mrs K Turner
Principal