



29<sup>th</sup> November 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

## November Updates

In my last letter to you I wrote that **'if we are to preserve our culture, we must continue to create it'** and over the past fortnight we have continued to build on this with trips in Science, Politics and Art, through our Creative Careers Fortnight and with our extensive provision of co-curricular and leadership opportunities. Earlier this week, we also held our annual Local Governing Body Day. Governors enjoyed visiting lessons, tutor times and speaking with groups of students and staff. I was grateful for their attendance and their contributions, feedback and challenge will continue to support our school improvement work.

### *Year 11 Mock Exams*

Yesterday, students in Year 11 received their Mock Exam results in a special Mock Exam Assembly. You will also have received these via Talaxy today. Whilst students felt a range of emotions after receiving their results, the message we gave to all students was that they must take every opportunity to learn from these exams so that they can achieve their full potential next summer. Teachers will be addressing any gaps in knowledge and skill that have been identified through work in lessons and independent study. How students respond will be essential to their success and we have emphasised their response must focus on outstanding attendance and punctuality, an excellent attitude to learning in class and high-quality, targeted revision and independent study. Parents' Evening on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December will provide you with essential information about what your child needs to do to make progress and how you can support them. If you have not yet made your appointments, then please do so by logging into your SchoolCloud account to make appointments with your child's subject teachers. If you need any support, please contact [parentsevening@riddlesdown.org](mailto:parentsevening@riddlesdown.org)

### *Attendance*

This week in our VALUES Curriculum and assemblies the focus has been on the importance of attendance. The VALUES language focus has been on Aim High and Stick At It in line with Government's National Campaign *'Moments Matter, Attendance Counts'*. Students have been reminded about the importance of attendance and we have reinforced the messages that:

- Missing school means missing lessons and learning
- Missing school means missing out on many wonderful curricular and co-curricular opportunities such as talks, events, assemblies, clubs, fixtures, rehearsals, training and leadership opportunities
- Missing school means missing screen-free time to socialise with friends at break and lunchtime

Essentially, the better a student's attendance, the better their outcomes. We know that good habits for life are established now and so at Riddlesdown Collegiate our aim is for all students to achieve at least 97% attendance. We value the partnerships we have with our families and we would be grateful for your support so that your child achieves this attendance goal this academic year.

### *Creative Careers Fortnight*

High-quality Careers education, advice and guidance is an essential part of our work. As part of Creative Careers Fortnight, Jade Keisha Gordon, a freelance photographer, delivered an assembly to Year 7 about her experiences of working in the creative sector. Not only did students find out about what her role entailed and what brands she has worked with, but also about the realities of working in self-employment and the importance of Maths and English to future job opportunities. Year 10 were able to hear from Matt Cartwright



from Twelve Architects about his career in architecture and some of the exciting projects he has been involved in around the globe. Year 10 will also have their Mock Interview Day on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December, which is a great experience for students, providing an opportunity to develop and receive feedback on their interviewing skills. We are very lucky to have had some fantastic careers talks so far this year and we will continue to have many other talks and events to support and inspire your children. We are always looking for speakers and so if you are happy to come and speak to our students about your career then please email our Careers Leader Zena Hole (zena.hole@riddlesdown.org) who will be delighted to hear from you.

## *End of Autumn Term and Start of Spring Term*

End of term will be at 12.00 p.m. on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December. On this day, there will be no lunch service but break service will be as normal so that students are able to get food while they are with us. Students should be ready to attend their Period 1, 2 and 3 lessons. They will complete the term with their Tutor, who along with their College Senior Teams will dismiss them. Students are invited to come to school on this day in 'mufti' (school uniform not required), and donations (which can be made on the day in cash or via Parent Pay) will be used to raise money for a new outdoor seating area for students. They should ensure they dress appropriately for school, avoiding clothing that is revealing or with inappropriate slogans. We will be holding a Christmas Jumper Day on 12<sup>th</sup> December to raise money for Save the Children and donations can be made using the same methods. We will also be collecting donations for Purley Food Hub and Tutors will provide students with a list of items which they can bring in to support those who need us most in our community.

Our first day back will be on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2025. Students will begin registration and have tutor time at 10.20 a.m. as staff will have training and an extended briefing in the morning. Gates will open for students to come onto site at 10.00 a.m. Students should not arrive earlier than that time.

## *Safeguarding Briefing*

### **Top Tips for Encouraging Open Conversations at Home**

Cultural and technological changes have made the experiences of today's children vastly different to our own childhoods; it can be challenging to engage children in open, honest conversation – especially about more sensitive topics. This, combined with many children's instinct to avoid "rocking the boat", can make it difficult to stay up to date with what is happening in their lives. However, it's hugely important that trusted adults still offer an empathetic ear and feel able to encourage young people to open up about their day-to-day activities. The attached guide provides ten top tips for promoting open conversations with children – helping to make sure there's someone they know they can turn to in times of need.

Yours faithfully

Mr D Osborne  
**Principal**