



16th January 2026

Dear Parent/Carer

New Year Updates

Happy New Year, and I hope all families had a wonderful Christmas break. As we begin this new year, I would like to take a moment to express my sincere gratitude for the continued support and partnership we share in the education and development of your child. I have really enjoyed welcoming students back to the Collegiate and spending time visiting lessons and tutor groups over the past week. When I spoke to students in assemblies last week, the central theme was hope—and in particular, that hope is not passive. Hope requires action. It is built through the choices we make each day and the effort we put into being better than we were before. I shared with students how excited I am about the wonderful things they will achieve this year as they work towards being the best versions of themselves and continue to contribute positively to our school and wider community.

Remembering Jaiden Shehata

On 23rd January, we will hold an extended tutor time to mark the first anniversary of Jaiden's death. This will be a quiet and respectful opportunity for students to pause, reflect, and honour Jaiden, a much-loved and special member of our school community whose positivity and joy continue to be remembered. We recognise that this may be an emotional time for some students, and appropriate support will be available throughout the day for anyone who may need it.

Behaviour & Standards

The standard of behaviour and attitudes across the school has been really impressive, and students have quickly settled back into the rhythm of our expectations. As we move through the colder months, we would like to remind families and students that while coats are encouraged when it is cold, the school blazer remains a compulsory item at all times. Items that are not part of the school uniform—including hoodies, rings, bracelets, and additional piercings beyond one small stud in the lower ear—will be confiscated. Your continued support in reinforcing these expectations is greatly appreciated and the link to the uniform requirement can be found [here](#).

Careers

We are currently seeking parents, carers, and members of the wider community who may be able to support our Careers Fair on Wednesday 25th February, from 8.00am until 3.00pm, by representing their industry and sharing their experiences with our students. If you, or someone you know, may be able to help—even for part of the day—we would be delighted to hear from you, as we understand that committing to a full day can be a big ask.

In particular, we still need representation from the Sports, Creative, Social Care, Trades, Transport, Retail and Hospitality industries. If you are able to support please email Zena Hole, our Careers Lead Zena.hole@riddlesdown.org and please feel free to share this email with any contacts who may be willing and able to attend. If you are unsure whether a role or industry would be suitable, please do not hesitate to get in touch with Zena Hole directly. Your support plays a vital role in helping our students explore future pathways, and we are very grateful for any help you can offer.



Co-Curricular

Riddlesdown offers a wide range of fantastic co-curricular opportunities that enrich students' experiences beyond the classroom and allow them to explore their interests, talents and passions. These activities help students develop confidence, resilience, teamwork and a strong sense of belonging within the Collegiate community. We expect all students to participate in at least one co-curricular activity, as involvement supports personal growth, promotes wellbeing, and encourages positive relationships with peers and staff. Engagement in co-curricular life plays an important role in helping students become well-rounded, motivated and successful learners. Details of all the wonderful opportunities on offer will be sent separately.

Student Leadership - The Diana Award Anti-Bullying Programme

On Friday 12th December 2025 Riddlesdown Students from Year 8 and 9 joined other schools from The Collegiate Trust to complete The Diana Award Anti-Bullying Ambassador Training. This program, established in memory of Diana, Princess of Wales, empowers young people to lead positive change and create a safer, kinder school community. The programme strengthened students' understanding of bullying, its impact, and the role young people play in shaping safe, inclusive and respectful school cultures. Our Riddlesdown Collegiate students were brilliant, contributing to activities and sharing thoughtful and exciting ideas throughout. We are excited to start our work with the Anti-Bullying Ambassadors this term as they start to think about and lead school-wide campaigns and working towards earning The Diana Award Social Action Badges in areas like Respect, Online Safety, and Wellbeing.

Attendance - Is My Child Too Ill for School?

We know it can be very difficult deciding whether to send your child into school when they're feeling under the weather. To help you make the right call, we have gathered the guidance below to keep our school community healthy and learning. As a general rule, if your child has a mild illness like a minor cough, runny nose, or sore throat but no fever, they are usually fine to attend. However, they must stay home if they have a high temperature (38°C or above). For more specific advice on common conditions, please use the following official resources:

- Is My Child Too Ill for School? (NHS Guide): A comprehensive A-Z guide for common illnesses like chickenpox, head lice, and sore throats. [Is my child too ill for school? – NHS](#)
- UKHSA Parent's Health Guide: A parent's guide to keeping kids healthy this school year. [A parent's guide to keeping kids healthy this school year – UK Health Security Agency](#)

Finally, we encourage families to remain closely engaged with the school throughout the year. Strong communication between home and school is essential, and we are always happy to work with you to support your child's learning, wellbeing, and progress. Thank you for your continued trust and support as we work in partnership to help every student thrive. We look forward to all that lies ahead and to making this year a positive, purposeful, and rewarding one for all our students.

Wishing you and your family a bright and successful year ahead!

Yours sincerely

Daniel Osborne
Principal



Safeguarding: HappyMaps

Last year we shared information about HappyMaps, a one stop hub of information on young people's mental health, for parents, professionals, and young people. We wanted to share this again as finding help and support for your mental health can be really difficult. Social media platforms are filled with people's opinions and experiences, but they may not always provide the information you need. Some of the content may even be scary or misleading. HappyMaps have worked hard to gather the best links to resources that deal with key issues and concerns for each, all in one place. The information below from HappyMaps summarises the service and there is also a link which we would encourage parents, carers and students to visit.

HappyMaps is an award-winning charity founded by healthcare professionals in collaboration with parents and young people. We understand the challenges families face when seeking help and how time-consuming it can be to navigate online information and find resources you trust. Let HappyMaps be your guide in finding the support you need, along with accurate information and recommended resources endorsed by CAMHS and fellow parents and young people.

[Home - HappyMaps: Help and Resources for Children's Mental Health](#)