



# Midhurst Rother College

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Part of United Learning

5 April 2022

Dear Parent / Carer

I write to you at the start of April, just over two years since the first Covid-19 lockdown. As we appear to be coming out the other side of the pandemic, I am sure you share my happiness and sense of relief that life is returning to a sense of normality again. Despite this not being the start of a new year, I think this provides us with the opportunity to look both backwards and forwards. Over the last two years, we have experienced two enforced school closures, remote learning and cancelled examinations. There is no doubt that lockdowns adversely affected some members of our community's mental health and wellbeing – something we remain determined to support your child with if this is needed.

Whilst it is clearly positive that society and travel is opening again, I am still mindful of those families who lost ones to covid; you are still very much in our thoughts. It is for this reason that we must remain vigilant regarding case numbers and, although we have removed most of our restrictions in school, we will reserve the right to reinstate them if an increase presents a risk to health. We will contact and defer to UKHSA when this is needed.

There is no longer a requirement for asymptomatic testing in schools and we will no longer be sending test kits home. We continue to follow the previous guidance and ask that you keep your child at home if they are unwell and have a high temperature or fever. They should avoid contact with others during this period and return to school after 3 days, and two negative tests, or when the fever has gone.

I am pleased that our range of trips and visits have started again and planning is underway for the trip to Normandy in the summer term and to Cologne in December. We are planning residential visits to Spain, the USA, Iceland and potentially a ski trip for students, too. Trips to London and local excursions have already started and the Gilbert Hannam Education Foundation are continuing to fund bursaries for Year 13 students whose travel bids were successful. The two winning groups this year will go to Switzerland and Paris in the summer. I have included a GHEF update from Phil Stringer, chair of the GHEF, at the end of this letter to give an overview of the fantastic support the foundation gives to us. Please look out for information on our residential trips and, in order to coordinate this better, we will send one communication to you with all our planned residential before May half-term.

With the removal of restrictions, we were able to host our Spring concert again this year, with a full audience. The evening was fantastic and showcased MRC students' talents and abilities in music, dance and drama. Music and drama continue to be real strengths in the school and Mrs Tidbury recently hired Indonesian Gamelan musical equipment for our students to experience. I look forward to the Summer concert as well as the forthcoming summer drama performance.

Our school's values of respect, happiness and achievement were chosen by our students and they underpin our community. In recent assemblies and in tutor time, students have been learning about the Russian invasion of Ukraine. As a consequence of this, we are now flying the international 'peace' flag from our flagpole near the school reception. We remain committed to helping to educate secondary-aged Ukrainian refugees who move into or area. Please contact us if you intend to be a sponsor and we will assist with applications to the Local Authority for school places with us.

**Principal: Stuart Edwards**

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We continue to be popular across our local area and beyond. Parents / carers will be aware that we increased our Planned Admission Number (PAN) from September 2022, following a six-week consultation in December and January. Our PAN is now 210 from September instead of 180. We have received in excess of 210 first choices for September and now have a waiting list for Year 7 for next year.

I would like to make parents / carers aware that it is likely that we will be inspected by Ofsted this calendar year. The school was last inspected in 2013 and my view is that it is right that the exemption that outstanding schools had from routine inspection has been removed across the country. I inspect for Ofsted and know from my experience that the requirements of the outstanding grade are exacting and are higher than they have ever been before. I feel that MRC is in a very strong position and know this from frequent visits to lessons, examination results, increasing numbers and the destinations of our leavers. We know that there are areas where we must continue to improve and focus our energies, but I also look forward to sharing the excellent aspects of our school to the inspection team when they choose to visit.

The school is well supported by an excellent governing body, led by the Chair of Governors, David Lawes. The governing body is currently seeking to expand and would like to add two parent governors to the board. The governors have an integral role in shaping the school's strategy and direction and ultimately helping the school to improve for your children. If you are interested in becoming a governor (no previous experience is required!), please contact Sarah Glaze, clerk to governors: [sarah.glaze@mrc-academy.org](mailto:sarah.glaze@mrc-academy.org). I would also like to thank parents / carers for your feedback on the assessment survey Mrs Wallis sent recently. The feedback we received will be used to shape how and what we report to parents to better your children's education and progress.

#### **Gilbert Hamman Education Foundation Update**

In 1672, our sponsor Gilbert Hannam, had the vision to set up a free school for 12 boys. Gilbert Hannam died 345 years ago but the legacy he established marked its 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary in March 2022. I wonder what he would think of the current school with its 1130 students and superb facilities? Gilbert Hannam or "Gillie" was a military man acting as a scout or messenger for a famous private regiment on the parliamentary side during the English Civil War called Captain Norton's Regiment. You will see the Foundation stone to the left of the main entrance doors of the College. It recognises the important contribution of Gilbert Hannam to education in Midhurst and bears the motto of the old Grammar School.

The Gilbert Hannam Education Foundation trustees continue a long history of stewardship of the assets and various other endowments of the legacy of Gilbert Hannam. Our guiding principle is to pursue the aims and ambitions of the Foundation in his spirit. To that end, in the last year we have given a grant of over £125,000 to the College to support students following the Covid pandemic and we have just devoted more grants to support the well-being and mental health of MRC students.

Some dates for your diary:

Saturday 7 May	Community Day
Thursday 26 May	Sixth Form Parents Evening

I would like to wish you, your family and friends a restful Easter break.

Yours sincerely



Stuart Edwards  
Principal