



# Midhurst Rother College

The best in everyone™

Part of United Learning

5 September 2022

Dear Parent / Carer

I write to you with a sense of optimism at the start of a new academic year. A new year brings a fresh start and I would like to offer a warm welcome all our new students and staff. Whilst Covid has not completely disappeared, it does appear to be receding and we have a normal start to the autumn term for the first time in three years. This is hugely positive for the students, especially in terms of continuity of learning and stability – something that has been missing in recent times. It was wonderful to see them in school with us today.

I am incredibly proud to lead the school and it is a real privilege to work with your children. I see them supporting each other, laughing, or playing together and working hard in lessons. I told students in my assemblies today that we all make mistakes, but that we must learn from this and always strive to do better. I have seen your children do this over the last few years and today, with all students in school, was no exception. Another year starts and we have the same determination to do better that we have always had.

### **Summer examination results**

Examinations took place this summer for the first time since 2019 and I am delighted with the students' individual and collective achievements. They, and their teachers, worked incredibly hard during a very disrupted period and I am pleased to report that our students' results bucked the national trend: Key Stage 5 students achieved higher grades in 2022 than the 2020 or 2021 cohorts were awarded by their teachers when exams were cancelled; GCSE students achieved the same grades as awarded by their teachers in 2021.

Prior to the examinations, Ofqual stated that grades would drop from 2022. This was the case across most of the country, but not for our students. At A-Level, 44% were awarded A\*/A, with 71% awarded A\*-B. 97% of students achieved a place at their first-choice university and our results are the strongest in our area. GCSE outcomes were equally good, with our results placing us as the highest achieving non-selective school in the locality. The students deserve huge credit for their outcomes and I am pleased that our Sixth Form is now the largest it has ever been.

### **Priorities for this year**

We have three main areas in our strategic plan for further improvements during this year. The first two points are a continuation of work we started last year, which the summer results proved were effective. Our priorities are:

1. Make sure that all students achieve their personal best and that every lesson is high pace, high challenge
2. Establish and embed good independent study habits through regular setting and checking of homework
3. Increase the amount that all students read and help weaker readers to catch up.

**Principal: Stuart Edwards**

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We recognise the importance of reading in enabling young people to experience the world beyond their immediate surroundings and unlocking their access to the whole curriculum. Last year, we introduced our whole school reading programme in tutor time, with each year group reading a carefully selected, age-appropriate text aimed at improving literacy and broadening students' cultural understanding. This year we would like work more closely with parents and carers to promote students reading more widely and for pleasure. This term, we will be launching a podcast to encourage and support your child to develop a love and appreciation of reading at home.

### **Social media**

In addition to the above priorities, excellent behaviour, mutual respect and acceptance are essential. These underpin students feeling safe in school and in the community. We know there are many positive aspects to social media and that it can be used in a supportive and positive way. I think we must also accept that there are times when this is not the case and in response to this, we have made a significant alteration to our behaviour policy. I have outlined these changes below to provide clarity for all so that you can discuss this with your son / daughter. The following have been added to our 'lines in the sand' and, if crossed, they are highly likely to lead to permanent exclusion. The full list and policy is available [here](#). The new additions cover:

- Students who persistently post disrespectful or harmful information about other students on social media in or out of school time;
- Students who post disrespectful or harmful information about staff or the College on social media in or out of school time;
- Students who persistently breach the law regarding any protected characteristics and commit a 'hate crime'.

These changes have been made in response to growing concerns nationally about the negative use of social media and the potential impact misuse can have on individual's feelings of safety and wellbeing. I must be clear that we have not experienced an increase at MRC of the types of incidents listed above, but I do feel we should be clear about our response to potential incidents should they take place.

### **Cost of living**

We know that the cost of living is having an impact on families within our community and that this is a challenging time. I enclose the following link to the Local Authority's website for Free School Meals [here](#). Please follow the link to see if your child is eligible. They would then receive an amount on their school account each week, which we manage centrally. We know that uniform costs can also be high for some families – please contact us if you need support with this and whilst we cannot guarantee help, we will do what we can to assist.

### **Dates for your diary**

Thursday 8 September	Yellow Photography (individual photos for all year groups)
Thursday 8 September	Year 9 Parent Information Evening 6.30pm
Wednesday 14 September	Year 10 Parent Information Evening 6.30pm
Thursday 15 September	Year 12 Parent Information Evening 6.30pm
Tuesday 20 September	Year 7 Welcome Evening 6.30pm
Wednesday 21 September	Year 8 Parent Information Evening 6.30pm
Thursday 22 September	Year 13 Parent Information Evening 6.30pm
Thursday 29 September	Prospective Year 7 Open Evening 6.30pm
Thursday 6 October	Sixth Form Options Evening
Thursday 13 October	Year 7 Parent Information and Tutor Evening

Yours sincerely



Stuart Edwards  
Principal