



Midhurst Rother College

The best in everyone™

Part of United Learning

15 February 2019

Dear Parent / Carer

I write to you at the end of a very busy half-term. There is a lot to update you on as we approach the break.

I continue to be impressed by the students and their behaviour, engagement, attitude to learning and each other. I know and accept that we don't get everything right all the time, but I do see a genuine determination from the students to do better. The year 11 internal exam results were stronger than at the same time last year, which is very pleasing, as were the Year 13 internal examinations. Each year group has taken United Learning mid-year assessments, which also show good levels of progress from last year. This is testimony to the hard work and positive attitude students have, as well as the levels of challenge they receive in lessons.

In December 2016, shortly after I started at the College, all students took part in an activity to contribute to what they wanted our values to be. As you know, the students chose *respect, happiness and achievement*. Our assemblies, tutor programme and my weekly blog reinforce these values, as does the way we work in College. I am aware, however, that our current Year 7 and 8 did not take part in this process and, as a consequence, we will revisit this in the second half of the Spring term with all students. We have just under 1100 students in the College and it is important that as we grow and new students join us, we revisit our values and the way we operate.

All schools evolve and change over time and we are no different; there are some areas we will alter from after half-term, in relation to our building, student voice and behaviour. Visits to lessons and discussion with students and staff tell us that students' behaviour and levels of engagement are very good in lessons. As a result, we will adapt and change our current behaviour systems to reflect this, including more rewards for students who do the right thing. The College will continue to grow next year and we will create additional classrooms and our new Head Boy and Girl team are determined that we have more inter-house competitions, a focus on recycling and a new look at how sixth formers can work with students in Key Stages 3 and 4. The first Principal's blog of the new term will be given to our new Head Boy and Girl and they will present this in more detail.

Safer internet day was 5 February this year and was the topic of assemblies, my blog and PSHE lessons. The internet is a fantastic tool, allowing us to communicate, work and share information with others. We have been working with students in particular last week on internet safety and staying safe online. Our focus here is on keeping privacy settings high and making sure only positive and supportive messages are posted online. We are asking students to make sure that if they comment on social media that it is 'kind, helpful, supportive or inspiring' before they post it. The overwhelming majority of our students get this right all the time and our 'not seen or heard' policy with regard to mobile devices encourages conversation, discussion and games at break and lunch, which is fantastic.

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In addition to being safe online, it is also important that we care for students' physical and emotional wellbeing. During activities week in the Summer term, we will train students in basic First Aid; an essential skill that will help them to help others. You will be aware that young people's emotional wellbeing has been in the media recently, in particular in relation to social media. Over the next six months, we will work as part of the Mental Health First Aid programme and will help our students to learn the basic skills to support each other in this area. We will also begin the process of achieving the 'Wellbeing Award for Schools' in connection with Optimus Education. I will provide more information on this to parents and carers after the break.

This term, we have continued with our policy of regular visits to lessons and we observed every member of staff teach. This was a very positive process, which gave us a lot of good practice to share as well as areas to improve. Our drive is to make sure every lesson in the College is as good as it can be and we are using INSET time to make sure that the quality of teaching improves in every classroom. I would also ask that all students complete tasks on Hegarty Maths, as this will help them to embed learning from lessons.

I am proud to lead the College and to have the opportunity to work with your children. I know and accept that we and they do not get everything right all the time, but there is a real determination to make sure we build upon our strengths, whilst also making sure we make improvements where we need to so that we continue to improve.

Some dates for your diary:

Tuesday 26 February	Year 12 UCAS Convention
Thursday 14 March	Gilbert Hannam Day / Evening
Tuesday 19 March	Spring Concert
Wednesday 20 March	Inset Day
Thursday 21 March	Year 9 Parents' Evening
Tuesday 26 March	Year 11 'Final Push' Evening
Tuesday 2 April	Year 8 Parents' Evening
Friday 5 April	End of term

I wish you and your family a restful half term.

Yours sincerely



Stuart Edwards
Principal