



Midhurst Rother College

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22 July 2021

Dear Parent / Carer

My end of year communication with you this year is written partly as a 'thank you' letter, a reflection on the year and looking ahead. We have all been through an incredibly turbulent 18 months, which has impacted all children across the country including those we are privileged to teach at Midhurst Rother College. Our students, your children, have quite simply been fantastic this year and deserve enormous credit for their adaptability, tenacity and their willingness to overcome every obstacle that Covid-19 has put in their way. I know that sometimes students make mistakes – we all do – but their willingness to listen and learn sets them apart from students at other schools.

This year started with the school in bubbles and students did not have access to the full school building for all their lessons. Due to rising case numbers, we entered a second lockdown and the school was closed to the majority of students for most of the Spring term. During this closure, Midhurst Rother College students worked incredibly hard to keep up with their learning and we have seen that in their work and lessons since their return. They have put themselves in a strong position to continue to be successful in the future.

After the school reopened, we tested students with Lateral Flow Device tests and cautiously began to remove some restrictions post Easter in line with government guidance. I am grateful to the volunteers who came in to test students to make sure we could open to all as soon as possible. We will need to test students again on their return in September and I would like to thank parents / carers who have already offered their time to support with this. Your support means a great deal to the students' education. Thank you.

We were fortunate to be chosen as a trial school for the 'orient gene' LFD tests, as this meant we could keep students in face-to-face learning, despite being close contacts of an infected person. In recent weeks, dozens of students and staff have had to self-isolate, following the end of this trial. As of this week, the responsibility for Track and Trace rests with the NHS; we stand ready to support if they need our help.

In January, exams were cancelled by the Department for Education and were replaced by Teacher Assessed Grades. This was a very unsettling time for our Year 11 and 13 students and staff had to learn a new way of assessing students to provide accurate grades that are representative of the students' ability. I am grateful to staff for their hard work in making sure this process was completed robustly and fairly. I look forward to sharing students' individual and collective successes next month. We will publish press releases on both GCSE and A-Level results' days in August but will not share school headline data with parents / carers. Our focus will be on the individual students and their outcomes.

I am optimistic about the new academic year. I regularly see students in lessons, working hard and doing well. Our focus for the new year will be on getting the basics right: high pace and challenge in every lesson, every day. High levels of achievement, excellent behaviour, uniform and manners and a renewed focus on homework and independent learning. For the latter point, we will put all homework for every year group, for every subject week by week on our website. Staff in school have been planning this and parents / carers will be able to see all homework tasks at the start of September for the year ahead.

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Wearing the correct uniform and wearing it correctly is a key responsibility of our students. Our students look incredibly smart – I asked around 100 of them recently if they feel smart in the uniform every student said yes. It is important we uphold these high standards. As a reminder, students are not permitted to wear trainers to school and we do not allow facial piercings or more than one earring to be worn in each ear. In response to student voice, students are allowed to wear black tailored shorts to school; it is good to see that so many of them are doing this. Non-uniform jumpers or hoodies are not permitted and these will be confiscated. Our uniform policy is available here: [Uniform Policy](#)

Our plan for the new academic year is to make sure all students achieve the full curriculum. We will support this through allocating all students additional teaching time in English and maths, as well as 1:1 support where needed. We will also focus on our 'values curriculum,' using the Aspirations programme and the Midhurst Rother College learning journey and student charter to support students' learning and progress both in and outside of the classroom. Continuing to educate students about peer-on-peer abuse, including racism and sexual harassment will be a central part of our tutor programme next year, alongside a reading programme for all.

The school continues to grow in popularity and I am delighted that we will welcome over 200 current Year 6 next year. The Local Authority recognise our increasing size and plans are underway to build new changing rooms – these will be ready for September 2022. I am also looking forward to our sixth form growing in number; we will now have a dedicated sixth form teaching area in the school and are planning to expand our curriculum offer to meet the increasing student demand. Outside of the classroom, our sixth form students will have free access to our gym and will also have the opportunity to gain part-time employment in the school to support our community, as well as a greater say with regard to the running of the school. Our current head boy and girl and sixth form leadership team are having a large impact on the school already I look forward to seeing more in the future.

Our return in September needs to be staggered for different year groups, as we need to test students before their return. Mr Lloyd will write to you separately with the timings for this. We will send a reminder to you on 2 September. Year groups will return as follows:

Friday 3 September	Years 7 and 12
Monday 6 September	Years 8, 11 and 13
Tuesday 7 September	Years 9 and 10

Year 7 should all arrive at 8.30am on Friday 3 September, as should Year 12. Year 12 will be tested at 8.30am and should report directly to the sports hall.

I will finish this letter where I started – by thanking your children for their excellent effort and attitude this year. I would also like to thank parents / carers for your support, which has been much needed in a very challenging year. I hope the new academic year will bring a return to normality, but even if this does not happen I am confident that your children have the strength of character to meet any challenges head on.

I would like to wish you and your family a safe and restful summer holiday.

Yours sincerely



Stuart Edwards
Principal