



20 October 2022

Dear Parents/Carers

OCTOBER UPDATE

We find ourselves at the end of the first half term already and tomorrow we will be celebrating with students in assemblies, recognising their achievements and efforts so far this term. College opens again to students on **Tuesday 1 November**, as Monday 31 October is a Trust INSET Day. The weeks leading up to Christmas are busy, with Year 11 and 13 sitting Mock exams, and events such as our Sixth Form Open Evening and the College Production. I look forward to seeing many of you over the course of this next half term.

As we reflect on the past seven weeks, we also consider how we might make improvements to support the work we are doing around our values and the equality of high-quality student provision. In that respect, I am writing with some reminders and updates regarding our expectations.

Settling-in Evening

This takes place this afternoon from 4.00 pm. Many thanks to those of you who have signed up to meet your child's tutor. There has been a strong uptake this year, which is crucial for developing home-school partnership working and to further improve relationships with families. If you have not managed to make an appointment, but wish to do so, please contact your child's Head of Year.

Rewards

There is nothing better than celebrating student success – and there is so much to celebrate!!! I hope you will have seen on our Socials our new 'Student of the week' feature, for those in Key Stage 3, and information and photographs of reward trips and student achievements. From Monday 7 November, our new-look Reward Shop will be open and we will be encouraging students to cash in their achievement points for rewards using Classcharts. We hope that, intrinsically, the reward of feeling success will be what matters to a student. However, we all like a tangible freebie and so hopefully the combination of both will help students feel even more positive about their achievements. Student Councils will regularly be asked about what stock they would like us to hold in the Reward Shop; as it is their shop it is important that items they would wish to 'purchase' are available. We look forward to continuing to celebrate students' success over the coming months.

Punctuality

Thank you for your support in helping students get to school on time for our new, slightly earlier start to the day. Generally, students are great at getting to lessons promptly and being ready to learn immediately. However, our Student Councils told us that they are getting frustrated with a minority of students who are not meeting these expectations and who are disrupting the learning by arriving late. Therefore, we will be reinforcing our expectations around punctuality. Developing good habits in time-keeping is a lifelong skill which we would want to promote in our students to best prepare them for success in life. Students will be reminded about getting to lessons on time in assemblies on the first day back. If they are late to lessons, including their morning reading lesson, without good reason, they will not be allowed to enter the classroom and disrupt the learning of others and instead will continue their learning in our 'Bridging Room'. They will be expected to make up for lost learning time in a lunchtime detention.

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Detentions

We are going to make a change to the detention system, acknowledging that families really wish to support us but collecting students after school can be really difficult. Therefore, we are moving to a lunchtime detention system. You will be notified of a detention via Classcharts and students will be expected to make their own way to the detention, therefore taking responsibility for the consequences of their actions. Detentions will last 20 minutes, thus enabling students to have time to eat and go to the toilet before lesson 5. We will still run a Friday after school detention for those who do not attend the lunchtime detention, for those with multiple behaviour logs, or those who misbehave during the detention. Failure to attend this, or misbehaviour during this, will result in suspension. Most students will not ever receive a detention. However, we felt it was important that all parents and carers know our systems to address the small amount of episodes of poor behaviour and to be assured that students' uninterrupted learning takes priority.

Homelearning

Homelearning is an important part of ensuring students gets the most out of their education with us; it is not optional and we expect students to complete all homelearning to the best of their ability. This sets students up well, not only for success in subjects at exam levels, but it also helps students get into good routines for lifelong learning. Teaching staff expect all students to complete homelearning satisfactorily and will be keeping students back at break times for 15 minutes if work is not completed or handed in. Once again, the majority of students undertake home learning very well indeed, but it is important that we uphold these expectations consistently for everyone.

I remain deeply proud of the students at South Dartmoor Community College; they are polite, friendly, happy and respectful. The vast majority get it right most of the time and we hope the clarity around some of the systems above will afford students the ability to make good decisions that impact positively upon themselves and others.

Wishing you a happy and relaxing half term break.



Mrs Jen Veal
Executive Head teacher

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