



08 September 2022

Dear Parent / Carer

## Welcome back!

I hope you had a wonderful summer and you are rested and relaxed, ready for the new academic year. The students have made an excellent start to term; they are to be commended on how well they have resumed their learning and settled back into college routines. It is a delight to have them back! May I take this opportunity to thank parents/carers for ensuring students have returned with the correct equipment and uniform to enable such a smooth start to the year.

I am writing with a number of updates and reminders. I hope that the information contained within is useful.

## Outcomes 2022

We were delighted with the outcomes from both our Year 11 and Year 13 cohort of students who have just left. Almost every student in Year 13 achieved what was required to go to their first choice university, which is the most important thing, and our Year 11 students performed excellently, making on average, the same amount of progress as students in the top 20 percent of schools nationally. These results show that our improvement journey continues apace, thanks to the hard work and collaboration of staff, students and parents/carers. Our current cohorts of students in these year groups are set to do better still, and parents/carers of these students should have received correspondence from us regarding additional revision classes, support and information. Please contact [ncox@southdartmoor.devon.sch.uk](mailto:ncox@southdartmoor.devon.sch.uk) if you have any questions.

## College Development Priorities

There are five development priorities for this academic year, four of which we share with the Trust. These are:

- Curriculum – to develop further what is learnt, when and how, ensuring students know and understand more and can apply it better in order to fulfil their potential.
- Assessment – to ensure students know what they need to do next in order to progress.
- Special Education Needs – to continue to improve provision for students with additional learning needs.
- Reading – to raise standards of literacy further so that students can fully access the curriculum.
- Our fifth priority is Culture, as we look to enhance the ethos of the school based on our values (please see below).

Please do not hesitate to contact a member of the leadership team or visit our website, if you wish to know more.

## Reading

As mentioned above, one of our key college development priorities is reading and we are really excited to introduce our morning reading lessons, Tuesday to Friday, from 8.40 am until 9.05 am. We have put together a bespoke selection of contemporary books, with a carefully balanced range of fiction and non-fiction titles. While following the text with their own copy of the book, students will be read to by their tutors for fifteen minutes each day and then engage in some independent reading and discussion. Our aims are to improve text comprehension and extend vocabulary, and bring books to life through enthusiastic and proficient reading. Furthermore, weekly assemblies will engage students with some of the broader themes tackled by each book, so that a lively dialogue is maintained across each year group. More information will be available on the website from next week to correspond with the launch of our new reading programme.

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## Values

Many of you may remember that we developed our core values 18 months or so ago just after I arrived. This process was done in consultation with students, staff, parents and governors. The core values of Truth, Respect, Equality and Excellence are really important to us and are what drive us as an institution. They represent who we are and what matters. We will be continuing to do extensive work on these this coming year to ensure that we live and breathe these qualities throughout the whole organisation. Students have been welcomed back with an assembly linked to our values on making the most of every opportunity afforded them, to find contentment in the everyday and to support each other. We will shortly be holding elections for the Student Council, holding our values at the centre of this process. If you want to find out more, do please contact Mrs Rashidi [gdaemi-rashidi@southdartmoor.devon.sch.uk](mailto:gdaemi-rashidi@southdartmoor.devon.sch.uk).

## Gates/Fence

For some time now, we have been trying to install security fencing and gates in order to completely secure the site. Due to supply chain issues, this has taken much longer than expected. However, all work is now complete. It feels a shame that we have to do this but the safety of students and staff is paramount. We now have a perimeter fence and two working security gates at the entrance to the college that will support our safeguarding measures. I am keen to reinforce that, despite the fence and its appearance, we in no way wish to discourage parents from visiting and being fully involved in the life of the school. Please do not hesitate to be in touch if you have any questions, at any time; we will always be glad of the contact. It is only through joint working that we will be able to best support our students.

## Class Charts

We continue to use Class Charts to communicate with home regarding praise, home learning and any areas of concerns. Please contact the relevant Head of Year if you do not have your Class Charts code. We want all parents/carers as well as students to be accessing their accounts, in order to make the most of their education.

## New staff

Further to my correspondence at the end of last term, we are delighted to welcome Peter Schofield to the English team, a highly experienced teacher, who will cover Kate Chambers' maternity leave. Pen portraits of our new staff will come out shortly in order to give you a flavour of our staff team.

## Thursday correspondence

We will continue to send all generic correspondence home to parents/carers on a Thursday, unless there is an urgent message, in a response to parental requests for smarter communication. We also post on Social Media, so do please look at our Facebook or Twitter accounts for news and messages. All feedback is always welcome.

We look forward to another highly successful year.

Best wishes



**Jen Veal**  
**Executive Head teacher**

Truth   Respect   Equality   Excellence