

16 September 2016

Dear Parent/Guardian

Firstly, I apologise for the length of this letter, but I sincerely hope you take time to read it as it covers very important information in respect to your son/daughter's time with us.

I hope that your son or daughter is settling into College and is enjoying his/her courses. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you as parents or, if your son/daughter is in the second year, to welcome you back. I would also like to give you some key information which will hopefully help you support your son/daughter to succeed at Coulsdon College.

The College environment and experience

We want to ensure that Coulsdon College is a happy place where all students are supported to succeed in their efforts.

During the induction week, your son/daughter was given the Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct, which outlines our expectations. You may wish to look at this so you are familiar with our high standards. Our rules however come down to three expectations:

- Arrive on time to all lessons (see note below about absence procedures)
- Work as hard as you possibly can
- Respect each other and the College environment.

If your son/daughter has not got a copy of the Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct, please ask him/her to get a copy from Student Reception. You will be able to access both documents on our website.

Every student meets their personal tutor in the weekly tutorial sessions and also has a Senior Tutor. The tutor and Senior Tutor regularly monitor student progress and attendance and are there to support students. We also have a Student Counsellor and Welfare Officer, who sees students in a confidential environment.

We offer a wide range of extra-curriculum activities and encourage our students to participate and widen their experience. Employers and universities like to see that applicants have participated in extra-curricular activities. We have careers advisers to help students decide on their next progression routes such as apprenticeship or university and related matters.

Attendance, punctuality and absence procedure

- **If your son/daughter is ill**, please telephone or e-mail the College by 10am on the first day of any absence giving the name, date, reason for absence and expected date of return and the register will be updated. Contact numbers to report absences are: Reception (01737 551176) or Cathy Turner (01737 551176 ext 169).
- **On return**, a letter from the parent/guardian needs to be brought in on the first day of the student's return to college to explain the absence. If this is not received within a week, the absence remains unauthorised.
- **If a student has to leave College during the College day**, through illness or otherwise, he/she must report to Student Reception to sign out before leaving. As parent/guardian, please provide an absence note, as outlined above.
- **If there are any ongoing/long-term illness**, your son/daughter should see his or her Senior Tutor (with supporting medical evidence) to discuss the issue and support needs. His/her Senior Tutor may then get in touch with you to discuss potential support needs.
- **Holiday dates** are listed at the end of this letter. Holidays in term-time will not be authorised under any circumstances and will count as unauthorised absence.

- If there are exceptional circumstances for an unforeseen absence, please contact the College. Attendance is centrally monitored and disciplinary action is triggered if attendance gives cause for concern.
- **If authorised absence falls below 95%**, the first trigger point for disciplinary intervention sets in. You will be informed if this is the case. If there is no sustained improvement, you will be asked to come to a meeting with the Senior Tutor. Students with persistent unacceptable attendance may be withdrawn from their courses.

Learning and achievement

- **Independent study and homework** out of class is vital for success. There is never a time when there is no homework to be done and all students should be spending one hour working outside of class for each hour they spend in class.
- **If a student has fallen behind with work**, teachers will put him/her on a 6-week programme (one or more hours per week). These sessions will be on the student's timetable and takes place in the ILC. There will be a detailed programme for the Learner Improvement Programme (LIP) sessions.
- **All subjects offer highly beneficial workshops**, which students will be asked to attend to support their study. These workshops are usually focused on specific topics or skills.
- **Part-time employment** can provide valuable work experience. However, there is ample evidence to suggest that more than ten hours a week of part-time work lowers a student's success in his/her courses significantly.

Progress Reviews

We have 5 Interim Report dates. The first internal review is due at the end of this month and you will be informed if teachers have identified concerns. The other four reports will be sent to you at the following times:

Report 1 Week 17 October
 Report 2 Week 5 December
 Report 3 Week 27 February
 Report 4 Week 24 April
 Dates for Parents' Evenings are attached.

Teachers give grades (1-4) for each of the following aspects:
Motivation (quality of the student's work relative to their ability)
Class ethic (conduct/behaviour in class)
Time management (meeting deadlines and keeping up to date)
 All students should be aiming for Grade 4, below three is unacceptable.

If at any point there is a concern in one subject, the Head of Department will meet with the student and parent/guardian. If the concern is in more than one subject, the students' Senior Tutor will coordinate a meeting with the student and parent/guardian. In any case, targets will be set which will be reviewed at the agreed time (usually 2 weeks). Students will of course be offered lots of support in meeting these targets. Students who do not respond to the targets set risk being removed from their courses.

At interview or enrolment, you may have informed us of your son's/daughter's learning needs or an ongoing/long-term illness/medical condition or this may have arisen only recently. I understand that this may be a sensitive issue; however, it is important for us to have the right information to be able to support your son/daughter as best we can, particularly in class and/or on any trips. For our records and in order to be able to discharge our duty of care responsibly, we would like you to supply us with information about the illness/medical condition. For this purpose, a form is attached to this letter and I would be grateful if you would complete the attached form and return it to Cathy Turner, either by mail or email (Catherine.turner@coulsdon.ac.uk) or your son/daughter can hand it in at Student Reception. Please be assured that the information will be treated confidentially and only shared with teachers on a "need-to-know" basis, unless you want it kept totally confidential. Please also let us know if/when the health or other issues are no longer a concern. Thank you for your cooperation.

Finally, I hope that your son/daughter will have a successful and happy time at Coulsdon College and will make the most of the opportunities to progress.

Yours sincerely



Christel Hartland
 Associate Principal (Students)