

14th October 2024

Dear students and parents

I wrote to all our community just over a week ago to provide an update about a series of incidents that took place in Horsham park on Thursday 3rd October. Since that date there has been a tremendous response from key local stakeholders to our concerns and I would like now to give further information about actions taken already and decisions made for the future.

We are very grateful to our local MP, John Milne, for meeting urgently with the Police and Horsham District Council on Friday 4th October, the day after the attacks, to review the investigation and initial response. Following this we hosted a meeting at Collyer's last Friday 11th October involving senior officers from Sussex Police, key staff from Horsham District Council, John Milne MP and colleagues from the secondary schools in central Horsham. This very positive meeting allowed us to gain significant reassurance about steps taken already. We raised concerns directly from our students who were affected and heard about council plans to mitigate risks in the coming months.

The Police response since 3rd October has been incredibly impressive, with significant additional resources deployed including extra patrols in key areas. This fast and robust action has led to multiple arrests and it is much appreciated that an enhanced presence will continue in the park for the time being. We will share the public Police statement in the coming days.

Horsham District Council have reviewed the pathway either side of the skatepark and given a firm commitment to reducing hedges, bushes and smaller trees to improve sightlines. This work will be done by Christmas and additional CCTV will also be installed. Our firm advice until this work has been completed continues to be that students should avoid this area unless in a very large group and walk around the outside of the Park or along the train station side of Pavilions leisure centre to get into town.

Part of our discussion with stakeholders centred on how best to consult with our local community about safety concerns and we were pleased to commit to setting up discussion forums between the council and our Richard Collyer Union for 16-19 year olds as well as the joint student council of local secondary schools for 11-16 year olds. As well as students, we also would like to hear from parents about local safety issues and this will form the focus of our next Parent Forum this term. If you are interested in taking part please email Linda Macleman LM@collyers.ac.uk.

Finally I would like to share with you all that on Tuesday 15th October we will have our regular yearly lockdown practice. This important part of keeping our community safe at Collyer's sits alongside our annual fire drill as a vital way of mitigating risk and reassuring our community. It is not linked specifically to the incidents in the park recently and I know all our students will take part in this in the usual calm and confident way.

I trust this further information will be of great reassurance and would like to thank Sussex Police, Horsham District Council, John Milne MP and our fellow schools in Horsham for their support over the last couple of weeks.

Keep safe everyone

Dan Lodge
Principal