



THE DOVER FEDERATION FOR THE ARTS  
MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

# ASTOR COLLEGE

*A Specialist College for the Arts*



Principal, Mr L Kane BA Hons PGCE NPQH

27 September 2018

Dear Parents and Carers

Welcome back to a new school year! I hope that all our students feel fully rested after their summer break and are fully ready for the challenges of this new year.

Our mission at Astor is to be **Adaptable**, uncover **Creative** talents and make everyone **Proud** of what they achieve. Working with our parents and carers we know that we are getting better and growing bigger each year. Our students are a credit to you all and we are very much looking forward to this coming year of hard work and great success.

### Welcome to New Students

We are very pleased to be joined by our new Year 7 students, a small number of students joining other year groups, and older students who have chosen to join our Sixth Form from elsewhere. We hope that they will soon feel settled in the Astor College community.

### Examination Results

Over the summer, the GCSE and A Level results were released, and I am very proud to share with you just some of the fabulous successes of Astor students. In the sixth form students were taking the new style A Level exam where, in most cases, the entire course is tested at the end of year 13. This is a huge difference from previous years and we know that all schools in England were finding this change quite challenging.

### Sixth Form Successes

- 25% of A Level grades were A\*-B (an improvement of 3% on the previous year and 8% over the last 2 years).
- We saw an improvement in our overall pass rate at A Level in most subjects.
- In AS exams the outcomes achieved are the best for three years and have many A-C grades across a range of subjects.
- Students gained more A\* grades in the A Level exams than the previous years.  
(1 student achieved A\* in all her subjects and 5 others had 2 or more.)
- All students that applied to University received offers and will be studying at a range of institutions across the country in many subjects.

### DFA MAT Company Offices

Astor College, Astor Avenue, Dover, Kent, CT17 0AS, Tel: 01304 201151, Fax: 01304 200152, email: [admin@astor.dfamat.com](mailto:admin@astor.dfamat.com)  
Registered in England and Wales No: 8039629



We were truly delighted with the successes of so many of our students this year at GCSE. Many exceeded our expectations of them and demonstrated that hard work and dedication really does make a difference when it comes to exams. GCSE courses were also very different this year. The content was more challenging and the grades in English and maths have moved from letter to numbers. Nonetheless, our students have achieved great results, giving them a strong foundation for their sixth form course, apprenticeships or college courses.

### **GCSE Successes**

- 50% of all the 1300 plus examinations taken were graded at a 4 or better (old C grade).
- A 10% improvement was achieved in the Maths and English at grade 4 or above. This means that we achieved the 40% threshold for the Maths and English government measure.
- The majority of subjects saw an improvement in the A\*-C grades and also the A\*-G grades on the previous year.
- The vocational courses had exceptional outcomes with all students achieving A\*-C grades across these subjects.

As our parents know, at Astor we focus on individual successes as well as celebrating the very highest performers. This year we were really pleased to note that many of our students who came in with low attainment from primary school were able to make exceptional progress and achieve very strong outcomes.

### **New Staff**

We have been joined by a number of new staff across several subject areas. We wish them every success in their work with our students and are delighted to have them joining us.

Miss Darby Alcorn – Maths

Ms Debbie Deveson – English

Mr Ben Rix – Science and Lesson Cover

Ms Rebecca Cloake – History

Mrs Victoria Nicholls – Dance Maternity Cover

Mr Cameron Keyes – Physical Education

We are also pleased to have appointed a number of apprentices who have joined our staff here at Astor.

Mrs Samantha Bough – Careers and Progression Administrator

Mr Kyrtis Rapley – Teaching Assistant

Mr Cae Shaef – ICT Technician

## **Structural work – Building Improvement**

The College has benefitted from a programme of building works and improvement over the past few years. However, our main building, which contains approximately half of our accommodation, is inevitably showing signs of age. On the advice of our architects and structural engineers we have begun the process of surveys and plans for submitting bids to the funding agencies to make improvements to the roof and classrooms.

We are engaging in preliminary discussions with the architects and contractors to look at the sports hall and toilets. However, I do not wish to raise expectations; any rebuilding would be phased, and take place over a number of years. In the meantime, we will continue to maintain the building as best we can to make the environment as pleasant as possible for the students – hence the redecoration work this summer in some areas.

## **Development Fund**

Students at Astor College benefit from a first-rate education provided by public funds. However, all schools are facing severe budgetary constraints as the public-sector savings take effect. Some 80% of our budget is spent on staff costs, and the necessity to reduce spending and reliance upon sponsorship for the extra-curricular activities eg art exhibitions, CCF, sporting events and shows means we are having to look at other means to help continue the valuable opportunities for the students. With rising costs for utilities and maintenance, the amount of money available to spend on developing and upgrading equipment and facilities is going to be limited.

With this in mind, we will be launching the Astor College Development Fund in the next few weeks. In common with many schools, we will be asking parents to consider making a donation to the College; this money will be used to improve the facilities used by students, for example by purchasing sports equipment or upgrading the ICT provision to take advantage of new technology. Donations to the Fund will be made through the Gift Aid scheme, allowing us to reclaim tax and increase the value of the donations by over 25%.

Please watch out for the formal launch of the Development Fund, and I hope you will feel able to support us to allow the College to continue to provide the best possible education for your child.

## **Uniform**

I would like to thank you for your tolerance and assistance with the transition to the logo on trousers and skirts. The students have returned extremely well presented and many visitors have already commented on the appearance of the students. We do expect all students to wear their uniform correctly and with pride as a member of our community. There remains, however, a small number who are still to purchase or discuss the uniform with us. I would therefore ask for your support in making sure that your child is properly dressed for College in the correct skirts and trousers.

Continual irritations, particularly with older students, include short ties, untucked shirts, and “hitched-up” skirts and I should be grateful if you would reinforce our expectations in these areas.

I have attached a copy of the Uniform Policy for your information; please note that there have been some changes since last year.

### **Attendance and Punctuality**

Good attendance is essential to your child's academic success. We aim for an overall attendance rate of at least 96% and attendance levels below 90% give us serious cause for concern. I should be grateful for your support in ensuring that your child only misses College where it is absolutely unavoidable. Routine medical appointments should be made outside College hours wherever possible.

Punctuality to College and lessons is also important as it is indicative of a student's general motivation and commitment towards school. If your child has a long journey, please make sure they leave in sufficient time to allow for traffic conditions or delays to the buses or trains.

### **Contact Details**

Great student success hinges on a strong partnership between home and College. It is vitally important that we stay in touch with each other, that we have up to date information about your child and that you let us know if home circumstances change. Working together we can support our young people through their studies and ensure that they each become the very best that they can be.

As you may know, we use a system called ParentMail to send information to parents by email and text. The system uses the contact information stored on our database, and it is essential that this information is correct. If you wish to receive letters from the College by email, you must ensure that we have an up-to-date email address. If you are in any doubt as to whether we have your correct details, please contact the College Office.

With my best wishes to students, parents and staff for the busy term that lies ahead.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L Kane', written in a cursive style.

Mr L Kane

Principal

## Appendix F

### Uniform and Appearance

Whether in the College or in the local community (College trips or sporting fixtures), our students represent Astor College. The wearing of full school uniform is expected as an integral part of the school ethos which promotes positive attitudes, is an outward sign of high standards and personal pride.

#### Uniform

<b>Blazer</b>	Black College blazer with embroidered College badge.
<b>Shirt</b>	White, plain school shirts with the top button fastened.
<b>Tie</b>	The appropriate College tie, tied with a neat knot and a suitable length.
<b>Skirts</b>	Pleated black skirt with the ship logo embroidered on, available from Channel uniform. Skirts should be worn with white or black socks, natural or black tights only.
<b>Trousers</b>	Plain black tailored trousers with the ship logo embroidered on, available from Channel uniform.
<b>Pullovers</b>	Plain black 'V' neck jumpers or the College jumpers with embroidered College badge can be worn under blazers but not instead of a blazer.
<b>Shoes</b>	Plain black, flat, closed shoes. Stitching, logos and laces should all be black not contrasting colours. No boots should be worn.
<b>Belts</b>	Plain black narrow belts only.
<b>Outdoor coats</b>	Waterproof coat which should not be denim, leather or leather effect. Pull on hoodies are not acceptable in College. Coats should not be worn in lessons or inside the school buildings.
<b>Hats</b>	Plain hats can be worn but not inside the school building. Peaked caps are not acceptable in College.

Personal appearance should enhance self-esteem and be suitable for a school environment.

Please also refer to the unacceptable extremes of personal appearance earlier in the policy.

**Jewellery** One wristwatch is acceptable.

Small, plain gold or silver ear piercings are allowed, these must not be considered by the responsible member of staff to pose a health and safety risk during practical activities such as PE. Large hoops, gemstones, diamante, crystals and other decorative styles are not permitted. Stretchers are not permitted and holes greater than 4mm are considered an extreme of personal appearance.

Necklaces may be worn but should remain invisible in College.

**Nose, face and tongue piercings are not acceptable, even with a retainer or colourless stud. Body piercings should not be visible.**

**Hair**

Hair should be of a style and colour suitable to school. Hair should be no shorter than a 'number 2' cut. There should be no shaved areas such as tramlines, logos, steps, extreme undercuts. Boys should be clean shaven, beards and moustaches are not acceptable in College. No extremes of hair colour are permitted.

The College reserves the right to make the final decision on what constitutes an extreme hairstyle.

**Make-up**

Make-up should be discrete and natural looking. Decisions regarding whether a student is wearing too much make-up rests with staff and students may be required to remove it.

Nails should be kept appropriately short, extremes of nail length and shape, are not appropriate whether natural or false. Nails should be suitable for school and practical activities and the responsible member of staff has the final decision.

**Tattoos**

Should be kept invisible.

The school supplier is Channel Uniforms 01303 487075/01303 847185. We do understand this can financial stress for parents so please contact us if you require assistance.