



# ROCHESTER

INDEPENDENT COLLEGE



“It’s a place for individuals.”  
“The students are a strikingly  
nice bunch and there’s  
a lovely air of tolerance  
and warmth.”

GOOD SCHOOLS GUIDE

THE  
GOOD  
SCHOOLS  
GUIDE

## WELCOME

Studying at Rochester Independent College  
combines academic rigour with a creative buzz.

Established in 1984, RIC is a locally and  
internationally renowned school. There’s no  
uniform, and students and staff are on first  
name terms. RIC accepts day students from  
the age of 11 and boarders from 15.

Find out more at [www.rochester-college.org](http://www.rochester-college.org)





## FAST FACTS

- Average class size: 8 Student to staff ratio: 3 to 1
- Number of students: 300 85% UK 15% International
- Day students from the age of 11, boarders from 15
- Varied academic and creative Lower School curriculum
- Widest range of subjects in Kent, Year 10 or 11 entry
- 40+ A level subjects, no subject combination restrictions
- Intensive one-year A level and GCSE courses as well as two-year programmes
- Year 12, 13 or '14' entry for A levels, first time or retake
- Top in Medway and top 5% in England for A level progress score (gov.uk)
- Good Schools Guide award winner for A level Maths, English Literature, Chemistry & Film Studies
- Over 100 impressively varied university places secured each year by sixth-form students
- 90 single room on-campus supervised boarding places, some ensuite
- Pastoral care and personal tutor support for every student
- College minibus services on selected routes in Kent
- By train: 37 mins from London St Pancras By car: 50 mins from Gatwick, 70 mins from Heathrow
- ISC accredited school Part of the Dukes Education Group





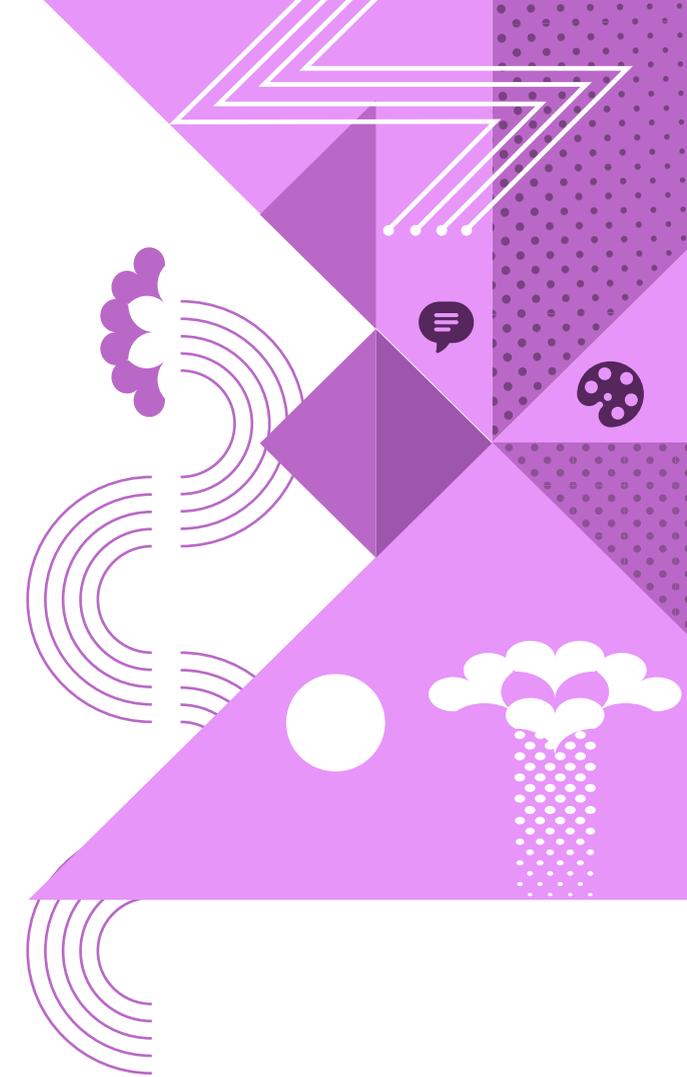
The City of Rochester is packed with beautiful old buildings associated with Charles Dickens, its most famous son. The famously juxtaposed Castle and Cathedral are living reminders of its historic strategic location. A journey of only 37 minutes connects students with the heart of London.



## STUDY WITH US

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We welcome everyone who has the desire and motivation to excel, not just those who have passed the 11+. While many students spend their whole secondary education at RIC, it is possible to join any year group from Year 7 to Year 13 and beyond - every year we welcome a significant number into 'Year 14' for retakes, new starts or re-starts to A levels. RIC aims to give all students an enjoyable and successful experience of school.





## ACADEMIC & CREATIVE

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“The top five university destinations are Leeds, Nottingham, Sussex, Cambridge and Imperial. Two RIC students have won places on the prestigious Fine Art degree course at UCL’s The Slade School.” GOOD SCHOOLS GUIDE

RIC has a very well established reputation in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) subjects and many home students have passed through RIC on their way to careers in areas such as Medicine, Veterinary Science and Engineering. The College is also proud to have an unbroken record of hosting a small number of Thai Government sponsored Maths and Science Olympiad Scholars every year since 1991.

Creativity is also central to RIC. We were one of the first independent schools in Kent to receive an Artsmark back in 2008 in recognition of the breadth and depth of creative provision. RIC was also one of the first UK schools to offer GCSE Film Studies and our A level Film Studies is very well established, winning Good Schools Guide Awards regularly. As well as GCSE and A level Drama, all students have the opportunity to take LAMDA exams. Photography, Graphic Design and History of Art are popular A level options. In Music, we offer both A level Music and Music Technology and the focus is on making study real and relevant.

“It would be hard to find better provision for an artist” GOOD SCHOOLS GUIDE



## HIGH-PERFORMING & NON-SELECTIVE

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“Many students transfer here after poor progress at AS or A level and the effect can be dramatic. It’s a sound investment - among the retakers, all got into university and three-quarters won Russell Group places.” GOOD SCHOOLS GUIDE

In the Government Tables released in January 2018, RIC was judged as being in the top 5% of schools in England and top in Medway for A Level progress. Our only entrance qualification for all years is an honest determination to work hard, and every year students exceed their own expectations. There is no secret to this success and no magic formula. At RIC, small classes allow excellent teachers to create an enjoyable and supportive learning environment. We are small enough to get to know everyone really well. Students enjoy being here and are treated as young adults. We encourage them to search for their own answers, voice their own opinions, and think creatively and independently.

Students leave RIC not only with excellent examination results but with enthusiasm for the future and new confidence in themselves and their education.

“The teaching at Rochester is rigorous and tailored to the best possible exam results. It offers a broad education combining its original focus on getting students into competitive courses such as medicine and dentistry with a new emphasis on the creative arts.” THE INDEPENDENT



## LOWER SCHOOL, YEARS 7-9

“Students’ personal development is excellent. Students relate exceptionally well to one another. They are aware of the impact of their actions on others and show high levels of self-control. They are courteous and appreciate the support they receive from their teachers. Behaviour is excellent.”  
ISI INSPECTION REPORT

RIC’s Lower School combines a friendly, informal approach with the teaching excellence and pastoral support of a top independent school. There is a happy, lively atmosphere where academic success follows naturally from students being settled in their environment and engaged by enthusiastic and talented teachers. The transition from primary to secondary school is smoother and less intimidating than is sometimes possible at a larger school.

From Year 7, children are provided with a positive and secure environment and an atmosphere in which they feel valued and encouraged. We are small enough to ensure that children are all supported to make progress and build on whatever foundations they join with. The curriculum is based around core subjects – English, Maths and Science. Beyond this, the emphasis is on communication skills and creative subjects, including Drama, Music, Media, Film, Art and Design. Central to the ethos is a focus on environmental issues, both locally and internationally.

New Road House, the Lower School base, has a dedicated refectory, quiet reading room, form rooms and a garden allotment. For lessons, the students also have access to all the science, art and performance facilities of the A level school.





## GCSE, YEARS 10-11

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RIC has the widest range of GCSE choices in Kent. Of course all students must study the core subjects (English, Maths and Science), and many who intend to carry on to Science A levels take the separate Biology Chemistry and Physics GCSEs. In addition, all students benefit from the chance to study more unusual subjects such as Film, Fashion and Textiles, Graphic Design or Photography to gain a really broadly based education and skill set. Others opt to focus primarily on the wide range of creative and performance subjects available at RIC.

Increasingly, students take GCSEs having been at RIC since Year 7. However, many join Year 10 or 11 from other schools for a wide variety of reasons, perhaps because of family relocation or to take subjects they have not had access to at previous schools, or simply to make a fresh start. Many take a one-year intensive GCSE course either from scratch or to catch up. Whatever the circumstances, all are given the help and support needed for the best possible grades. Class sizes are small and, as in the A level school, are supplemented by one-to-one support and a highly structured programme of testing and exam practice.

“Pupils have come from grammars where they felt under too much pressure, or from large schools where they felt overwhelmed, and all say they are learning better and enjoying school much more here.” GOOD SCHOOLS GUIDE





## SIXTH FORM

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There is no academic selection for entry to sixth form at RIC. Our student destinations list is consistently topped with entries to the most competitive and prestigious universities because our results are consistently excellent. While many of our students come to us with outstanding academic records, others do not; we believe that commitment, enthusiasm and hard work build the best foundation for A level and career success.

RIC offers a distinctive alternative to a conventional school sixth form and a real stepping stone between school and university or a career. There is a uniquely flexible timetable and there are no restrictions on subject combinations.

A key feature of all A level courses is frequent testing and examination practice which keeps students constantly aware of their own progress. Small classes and frequent meetings with a supportive network of Personal Tutors enable students to really benefit from this awareness and become far more actively and positively involved in their own education. This in turn leads almost inevitably to excellent results.

We are one of the largest private sixth forms in Kent and our expertise in advising students and guiding them through university applications is unmatched. We also run programmes of advice and events for those considering other career paths.





## RETAKE OR RESTART

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RIC began life helping students who needed to retake. We are good at short courses and we are good at advising students how to adjust their educational plans when they meet hurdles.

The most common new starts are made at the beginning or the midpoint of GCSE or A level courses or after disappointing results. Sometimes, students even start degree courses and then realise they have taken the wrong path. It is increasingly common for students to restart A levels completely with a new and more inspiring set of subjects. At RIC, small classes and individually tailored support not only rebuilds confidence and helps students improve results, it often leads to them exceeding their own expectations.

**Intensive A level courses** have been offered at RIC alongside the conventional two years since 1984. Students often add a new subject or even two to take from scratch in one year to add some zest to a retake year and often achieve top grades in these short intensive courses. Every year, students who have done this achieve places at top universities demonstrating that rather than penalising retake students, universities often appreciate the academic commitment they demonstrate.

**Retaking GCSEs**, even core subjects, is often possible alongside starting A level courses. There are many reasons for under-performance at GCSE and it need not be a barrier to a future at even the most highly selective universities. At RIC, we have long experience of helping students who need to retake GCSEs either as single subjects or as a whole set.



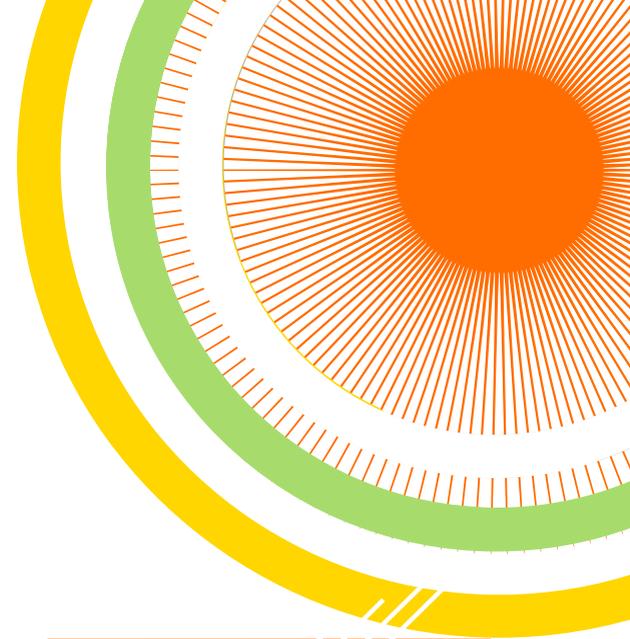


## OUR DIFFERENCE

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We offer a distinctive alternative to both traditional independent education and the highly selective local grammar schools. The focus is on achievement without unnecessary pressure, on examination success in a lively, supportive and informal atmosphere. Students learn and achieve more because they enjoy school and feel positive about themselves.

The College's flying pig mascot is immortalised on a striking pair of steel sculptural gates, forming a unique on-campus musical instrument for students and local musicians to use. The gates are a landmark piece of public art, commissioned and designed to demonstrate RIC's commitment to creativity and individuality in a way that is totally original, built to last, beautiful and, most importantly, fun.





## CAMPUS

At the heart of a designated conservation area, the College occupies a historically distinctive site. The mostly listed buildings are linked by award-winning wildlife gardens to create a unique sense of place. It is a tranquil space where students can explore, study and work. Modern teaching accommodation is furnished to the highest possible standard while retaining many original Georgian features.

The centres of the College are the two busy refectories, 'Piglet's Pantry' for the Lower School in New Road House and 'Chesters' in Star Hill for Sixth Form day and boarding students. All food is freshly prepared on the premises by our own team of chefs. 90 boarders are accommodated on site and some rooms have ensuite facilities.

Underhill Hall is home to RIC Drama with seating for 100 people. The copper canopied roof transforms into an open-air auditorium with productions from visiting theatre companies and students. Underhill Hall is also the place in which students sit their GCSE and A level examinations in the summer term.

The College has first-class ICT facilities for student use. The network is primarily PC based but there are Apple Mac suites for Graphic Design, Music Technology and Media. There are subject specific academic libraries and a fully equipped photographic studio and dark room.

The College has two cinema rooms equipped with digital projection facilities and surround sound, student common rooms and fully equipped science laboratories. In the grounds is our fitness gym, an all-weather sports pitch and the Lower School allotment.

“The campus is as unique  
as the school.”

GOOD SCHOOLS GUIDE





## BOARDING

RIC offers a real alternative to traditional independent boarding schools and our on-campus halls quickly become a home from home. Up to 90 of the 300 students at the College board each year. Boarding is all in single rooms, some of which have ensuite facilities. It combines the informality of a university hall of residence with the supervision and pastoral support appropriate for older teenagers. The emphasis is on providing a comfortable, happy and fun environment.

Moving to a new school can be tough, but at RIC there's a dedicated team of boarding staff to help students feel at home. There are also academic tutors living in each of the halls to provide expert homework help in the evenings. Boarders are supported by the College nurse and a team of academic Personal Tutors.

Over half of our cosmopolitan mix of boarders each year are English, including many from Kent, but we also welcome international students looking to study in the UK in order to gain entry to top UK universities and art schools.

As half of the residential community is new each year, it's easy to make new and interesting friends. Overseas students are fully integrated into the life of the school rather than in a separate international study centre. We do not have large groups of native speakers from any one country so for those whose first language is not English, improvement in speaking is inescapable.





## SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION

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“This is just to say a very big ‘thank you’ to all of my son’s tutors for your superb guidance, expert management of the application for Law, unfailing kindness, patience and brilliant teaching. You taught him to think properly, to write clearly and fulfilled every promise you made to us.”

FORMER PARENT

Classes are characterised by the enthusiastic engagement of both students and teachers in the learning process. Students sit around tables, tutorial style. There is no back of the class. Our teachers thoroughly prepare students for their exams but also inspire in them a thirst for learning for its own sake rather than just narrowly prescriptive examination specifications.

Students take regular formal tests, keeping them on target. Problems are dealt with immediately. Teaching and pastoral staff are proactive, identifying where students are having difficulties and offering practical help, solutions and encouragement. Overseas students are carefully supported and well integrated. If required, they receive English language support.

Tutors file regular reports and these are emailed to parents giving constant feedback. The College operates an ‘open door’ policy and parents feel free to come and see, telephone or email Personal Tutors to discuss any issue concerning them.

“Parents all speak highly of the pastoral care and the growth in confidence they have witnessed in their children.” GOOD SCHOOLS GUIDE





## NEXT STEPS

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For prospective Lower School students, regular taster days help give a real feel for how RIC works.

For prospective Sixth Formers, RIC interviews are a chance to explore your education and plan a route forward that matches your career or university aspirations. These may look different for every student who joins us. A small school allows this flexibility.





## HOW TO APPLY

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We do not hold formal open days. Instead students should visit the College for an informal interview together with the parent or guardian. Preferably this should be arranged in term time so there is an opportunity to meet teachers and students and see lessons in progress. We also offer taster days for those wishing to experience what it's like to be a RIC student first hand. International students can, of course, be interviewed over Skype. There are no entrance examinations, although students whose first language is not English may be asked to take an English test if they do not have a formal qualification.

**Admission is based on:**

A successful interview with the Principal or another senior member of staff

A satisfactory reference from the previous school



The first step is to contact us to arrange an informal visit, interview and campus tour.

**Call 01634 828115 or email us at [admissions@rochester-college.org](mailto:admissions@rochester-college.org)**

Come and see what makes RIC work. We'd love to show you our school.

*"We were blown away by RIC on our first visit. It was clear from the moment we walked through the door that the staff here really 'get' teenagers. The excellence of what you're doing – and the integrity; passion; pragmatism and good humour with which you appeared to be doing it – convinced us it was the right place for our son." CURRENT PARENTS*

