

30th September 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

Firstly, we want to thank our Year 13 students, parents and carers for your patience whilst we faced staff absence within the sixth form leadership team at the beginning of term. We hope you find this letter a useful update about a number of important issues regarding our Year 13 students this term.

Attendance and private study

Year 13 have settled back into school well and found routines around private study now that they have returned to school full time; this is great to see. We are aware that there have been some issues around access to laptops and printing in the sixth form centre and our IT technicians are working to resolve this as soon as possible.

We would like to remind students, parents and carers of the importance of full attendance in this important final year of schooling. Consistent high levels of attendance and excellent punctuality are characteristics of students who achieve above or in-line with their potential. Research shows that poor attendance and punctuality have a serious and detrimental effect on outcomes. Attendance falling below 95% has been shown to result in an average reduction of one grade at A level per subject and this increases to two grades when attendance falls below 90%. Our attendance target is set at an aspirational level of 97% to ensure the best possible outcomes for our students. Attendance to all lessons is compulsory, as is scanning in and out of school with students' lanyard card on entry and exit.

If students have a genuine reason for absence, they or a parent should contact Bev Moore in the sixth form office on 01604 679594 before 8.30am to let the school know the reason for absence. Unexplained absence will be followed up by Bev Moore, the mentor, Head of Year and/or Director of Sixth Form. Students should make every effort to book driving lessons and medical/dental appointments outside of lesson times. Please let Bev Moore know in advance of any appointments, so that she can prepare a pass for the student to be allowed to leave the school site.

Assessments and Learning Indicators

Year 13 will be taking their first assessments of the year in most subjects next week, following their PPEs sat at the end of the summer term. The grades achieved in both sets of assessments are helpful in terms of being able to track student progress, to allow subject staff and the sixth form team to identify where any further support may be needed for individual students. Grades achieved in next week's assessments, current 'working at' grades and Learning Indicators, will be shared via Edulink upon return to school after the half term holiday.

UCAS

Our Year 13 students have made a good start on their UCAS applications. Every student in Year 13 has been allocated a mentor and is working with them individually to apply through UCAS. All students have been emailed important details about the process of application this week. The deadline for completed personal statement drafts to be with the mentor is **Monday 1st November**. Completed UCAS forms and personal statements need to be ready by **Wednesday 1st December**. Mentors write the reference for each student, based on subject-specific



statements provided by teaching staff as well as additional information each student shares with their mentor. UCAS predicted grades are provided by subject staff, based on their professional judgement and their holistic knowledge of the student to date (i.e. the grade is not based on any one individual assessment). Predicted grades are intended to be aspirational but realistic, to ensure our students have the best possible chance of securing achievable offers.

UCAS charge a fee to process applications. This year, it is £26 for a full application to up to five institutions (or £20 for an application to a single choice). This should be paid via Parent Pay to the school as soon as possible and no later than 1st December. Completed applications cannot be sent until this payment has been made.

Lockers

We are looking to issue lockers within the sixth form building to those students who would like somewhere to store their belongings during the school day. Should your child wish to be allocated a locker, please pay a non-refundable fee of £5 into your Parent Pay account by Wednesday 6th October. We will then allocate lockers as soon as possible thereafter.

Support

Students have a range of ways of accessing support in school, should they need it. Mentors are the initial point of contact for all students and will be able to direct students to the most appropriate member of staff. We also have access to an in-school counselling service through The Lowdown and Mrs Nicholson, our Senior Tutor responsible for wellbeing, has invited all students to join our Mental Health and Wellbeing Google Classroom. Through this, she shares a wealth of resources to support student's wellbeing and hosts live 'Google Meet' sessions on particular topics each 'Wellbeing Wednesday'.

For further details on the UCAS process and supporting your child with this or other post-18 options, please see the careers/future pathways links below, as well as other useful resources for parents and carers:

Careers/future pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● UCAS website: https://www.ucas.com/ ● Webinar hosted with University of Northampton earlier this year: https://www.nsg.northants.sch.uk/page/?title=Future+Pathways%3A+Information+fo+r+Parents+and+Carers&pid=221 ● Unifrog website: https://www.unifrog.org/ ● Amazing Apprenticeships website: https://amazingapprenticeships.com/parent-zone/ ● Apprenticeship Information presentation from earlier this year: https://www.nsg.northants.sch.uk/page/?title=Future+Pathways%3A+Information+fo+r+Parents+and+Carers&pid=221
Revision/study skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sensible tips for study approaches/techniques: https://timfootstudyskills.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/9-Top-Study-Tips-for-Starting-Year-13.pdf ● VESPA mindset booklet – available on the Future Pathways Google Classroom ● Revision materials: https://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/wiki/A-Level_RevisionTips
Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Link to numerous wellbeing support sites/phone lines (please copy and paste this rather than clicking to access): https://docs.google.com/document/d/1_TM4QzAGIVrcbohqn0kk4XS7u633KcktnroPBzsYvc/edit?usp=sharing

We hope this letter has provided a useful update. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions or concerns.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs Claire Green
Director of Sixth Form

Mr D Wynn
Head of Year 13

