

24 September 2020

Dear Parent or Carer

RE: Welcome letter

It has been a real pleasure to welcome your child back into Year 13, following the disruption that we have all faced during 2020. Our focus is now fully on doing all that we can to prepare the students for examinations this summer, enabling them to access the future destinations that they are striving for.

In order to maximise progress with the Year 13 students, we have increased teaching time across all subjects. Initially staff are working to consolidate and test understanding of work completed over the lockdown period. This will enable them to address any misconceptions as they embark on delivering the Year 2 elements of the course. The students will continue to have fortnightly assessments in each subject area where they can develop their exam technique and identify areas of work that they and staff can then address together. We hope to be able to conduct formal mock exams in January to further help the students to prepare.

In addition to the taught hours, we always recommend that Key Stage 5 students should be spending approximately four hours on additional study per subject area each week. There is always something to do as a Sixth Form student during these study sessions and I would recommend that a regular programme of review and consolidation, adding further depth to notes from individual research, is the best way to ensure that they are secure in their understanding. They should also be seeking to use past exam questions and mark schemes, where possible, to ensure that they are familiar with the demands of the exam board. In addition we have advised all staff to ask for resubmission of homework that is well below a student's target grade to ensure that they reach their full potential. It is advisable that they establish a pattern of work which enables this to occur in a planned manner. They have the time and facilities to do some of this during their Sixth Form day and should strive to maximise their time in the Sixth Form. The study centre is always available to them from 8.00 am - 5.45 pm daily.

At this point of Year 13 the students should be closely considering their next steps after completing the Sixth Form, be that seeking university and apprenticeship places, or employment. We have asked all students to allocate a morning a week where they will attend the study centre so that a dedicated team of Sixth Form tutors can support them in completing the relevant applications. I will also be available after school on a Monday and Thursday to support students with applications.

If students are intending to pursue a university place by now they should have registered with UCAS, completed the majority of their application form, considered potential destinations and begun drafting their personal statement. If students are applying for medicine, veterinary science, dentistry, or Oxbridge, they will need to meet the October 15 2020 deadline. For all other university applications the Sixth Form internal deadline is December 14 2020. Once students have sent their application they will receive conditional offers for universities, which will explain what grades the universities expect them to achieve to secure their place on the course. Once students have received all offers they will need to choose their preferred first and second choice destination by the start of May. Some courses may require an interview and I will provide extensive interview practice and preparation for these students.

Apprenticeship applications are individual to the employers offering them and as such have no central deadline. Students seeking an apprenticeship will need to use the various search functions available to find relevant apprenticeships prior to an application. I would recommend that they set time aside to carry out this research weekly, although many apprenticeships starting in September 2021 will not be advertised until much later this year. Students hoping to secure an apprenticeship should have an up to date CV and covering letter available and ready to send, should an opportunity present itself. The staff present each morning will help students to prepare these materials. Interview practice will also be offered where relevant.

To help you keep in touch with child's progress, we will report home during the year and there will be a Year 13 progress evening later in the year, where you can talk directly (although possibly virtually) with teaching staff. However, if you have any current concerns or queries, please don't hesitate to contact me at darren.andrews@driffieldschool.org.uk to discuss matters.

Yours sincerely

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

Mr. D Andrews
Head of Sixth Form