



September 2014

Dear Parents,

I thought that it might be helpful to make early contact with you in, this, your son's vital final year at King's. The A/S results reflected both the full range of student ability but also a wide range of application, organisation and discipline. The return to linear examinations means that all A/S re-sits and A2 examinations will now take place at the end of the academic year. These examinations will demand that students have a secure and extensive knowledge and understanding of greater volumes of subject content than in previous years. Consequently more students will be guided to drop to a three (or in particular cases, two) academic subject plus General Studies programme of study than has been the case in recent years. Moreover, the school will be running rigorous Mock Examinations in early February and any student whose results confirm a lack of progress on a course is likely to have an enforced change made to their programme of study. I must stress that these actions are being taken simply in an attempt to secure the best possible results for our students. In the absence of January examinations it is critical that any student with elements of course work or other practical work is completed to the highest possible standard and in a timely fashion. Working ahead of deadlines enables students to receive the greatest allowable support and guidance from subject specialists and I urge parents to monitor the time lines to enable maximum time for the revision period just before and after Easter.

Your son should be proactively researching and formulating his Plan 'A' and 'B' for next year whether that is a well-balanced UCAS application; Apprenticeship application; Application to employment and training or indeed any combination.

As parents you can contribute very significantly. Following his recent results your son needs as much support and guidance as he has ever done. Of course, as with us, the art is to provide him with that sense of support and guidance without denying him his sense of growing maturity and independence. Hopefully by now your son will know that the more responsible, committed, proactive, mature and honest his approach to study, the more productive it and his relationships with teachers will be. Moreover and perhaps most importantly he will generate a virtuous circle of self-motivation, sense of achievement and satisfaction.

As a final year student your son remains a role model for younger students. He will in many ways be more influential than parents and staff in shaping their behaviour and attitudes and that is why we value positive examples so highly. This is particularly true after a summer in which the school has continued to refurbish and improve its facilities to a standard that the whole community richly deserves but we must now work hard to preserve.

I hope that your son will where possible be able to contribute to the rich and diverse cultural, sporting and social life the school offers. However, as the demands of university admissions' tutors and employers become ever greater and the costs of a degree significantly higher, work must be the focus of his life. Experience shows us that if his work is going well, so will your son's life be. It is essential that he routinely gives each subject his full commitment both in lessons and independent study time. To facilitate this I am delighted to report that the Sixth Form Study Centre on the ground floor of the Newton Block continues to provide an excellent resource. Students who have been identified by the school as close to, on or above their academic targets have earned the right to complete their independent study in the Sixth Form Centre or elsewhere. Unsurprisingly, there is a strong correlation between students with high attendance who use learning spaces productively and successful outcomes.

As you will know, many of the difficulties that arise are often attributable to poor communication for whatever reason. With this in mind I enclose a slightly adapted copy of 'Expectations of a Sixth Form Student' which may provide a useful reference point for you. It might usefully be kept at hand (even under a fridge magnet!) when clarifying what your son should be doing. He will know what that is and any attempts to convince you otherwise merits a telephone call to school for clarification. I am sure that we can depend on your support in reinforcing and meeting these expectations particularly in relation to attendance, punctuality and independent study. We look forward to working together to help your son meet his personal and academic targets.

Should you experience any difficulties at any time I hope that you will contact Mr Whales, Assistant Head of Sixth Form, or me, so that together we can find ways of resolving them.

Yours sincerely,

N C BARTON  
Assistant Headteacher &  
Head of Sixth Form

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## Expectations of a Sixth Form Student (Y13) 2014-15

<b>Attendance</b>  <b>(absence notes)</b> <b>(appointments)</b> <b>(holidays)</b>	Patchy attendance is the major contributor to poor performance. Your son should only take time off school if genuinely ill. In that eventuality he must produce a self certification note (available via form tutor) at his next registration explaining the circumstances of his absence. Medical, dental and driving appointments should, where possible, be arranged outside school time or in the lunch hour. Likewise, with external examinations happening throughout the sixth form, holidays of any sort are actively discouraged. If absence is unavoidable your son should as a matter of courtesy speak with the staff concerned and ensure that he can make good missed work as soon as possible.
<b>Punctuality</b>	To be an effective Sixth Form student your son is expected to be at school for all registrations (Tutor Period at 8.45am and P4 at 1.35pm) and lessons at the prescribed time. As those who work part time know, punctuality is a minimum expectation of <u>all</u> employers too!
<b>Deadlines</b>	Deadlines, particularly for coursework <b>MUST</b> be met (taking time out of school ('sick') to catch up, damages your son's prospects in his other subjects). As a Sixth Form student your son will have greater responsibility for organising his independent study and must ensure that he builds in sufficient time to manage work in ALL his subjects. As a general rule 'little and often' is more effective than the intermittent 'Blitz'! If he is struggling to keep up it is imperative that he tells his teachers so that they can provide early support.
<b>'Homework'</b>	A good student who works well in class should do the equivalent of <u>about</u> 7hrs homework Monday to Friday and <u>about</u> the same 7 hrs over the weekend.
<b>Appearance</b>	Thankfully the majority of students share a pride in their appearance. They are expected to wear the appropriate school uniform smartly. We particularly welcome parental support in the following areas:- 1. Clean, well groomed hair in accordance with the school rules (no extremes of length style or colour). If your son is in any doubt he should confirm the situation with NCB, NOW, or his Form Tutor before experimenting 2. Blazer (NOT topcoat) to be worn in school 3. Appropriate school jumpers (NOT fleeces) to be worn in school 4. Top button done up, tie tied to cover top button and shirt tucked in. In short we expect students to present themselves as they would do in a professional, 'uniformed' organisation
<b>Employment Extra-Curricular</b>	Work experience paid or otherwise and sporting, cultural and social interests provide invaluable experience and transferable skills and augment a student's CV. However, it is essential that your son finds the right balance. If there is a conflict of interests his academic work should be given priority.
<b>Games</b>	Although we encourage healthy physical activity as an important contributory factor in the school's academic successes, Wednesday afternoon Games is entirely voluntary in Y13. However, any student with team commitments is expected to honour them.
<b>Timetable</b>	It would be most helpful if you kept a copy of your son's timetable and any subsequent amendments if he changes course so that you are fully aware of his commitments.
<b>Assemblies Tutor Period Sixth form Notice board</b>	A responsible Sixth Form student will always be fully aware of what is happening within the school. Essential information is disseminated daily in tutor periods and in assemblies which is why attendance at these is obligatory. Message boards and the notice boards outside the Sixth Form Centre are also rich sources of information. Thus ignorance can never be used as a defence!
<b>Independent Study</b>	In the Y13 independent study time takes place at school either in the Sixth Form Centre or the Sixth Form Study Centre. <u>No</u> student can be legitimately working at home during the school day except after lunch if your son has no timetabled lessons (as per his published timetable) or during external examination periods dates of which will be published (those allowed to IS in the afternoon will be specifically identified).
<b>Telephone</b>	If ever you feel the need to discuss matters with us please contact your son's Form Tutor, Mr Whales, or myself via the School Office. You <u>should</u> be able to guarantee making contact 8.30 - 9.15am and 12.30 - 1.30pm.