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January 2018

Dear All,

I do hope you enjoyed the Christmas break and if you were struck down by one of the many 'bugs' that have been circulating, you are recovered.

With less than four weeks until the 'mock' examinations, details of which are re-published below, and with the relative independence of university places or apprenticeships and employment beckoning it seems a sensible time to extend greater freedoms to every Year 13 who is deemed to be 'on track' in terms of their individual targets and who is demonstrating a responsible approach to their independent study commitments. To that end those students will be allowed to complete ALL their independent study off site should they so wish. Students identified as not being 'on track' will be required to complete their independent study in the Sixth Form Study areas until their teachers are satisfied that they are working with the sustained focus and energy required at this stage. Additionally, any student who has yet to complete their A-level coursework may also be required to work under supervision in the Sixth Form Study Centre on Wednesday Afternoons until it has been completed to a satisfactory standard. It will give the relevant staff genuine pleasure to extend the privilege enjoyed by others as soon as these students have demonstrated a sustained, consistent and committed approach to each of their subjects.

The importance of the seven weeks running up to and including the 'mocks' and the subsequent eleven weeks before A-levels start on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> May, cannot be overemphasised and so every student is expected to be present in every timetabled teaching lesson. This period will almost certainly include moments of uncertainty for most students and this is only to be expected. Effective ways of ameliorating anxiety include: -

1. Attending every additional revision session put on by staff
2. Accepting responsibility for our decision making and those elements of revision over which we have control
3. Asking questions of staff or peers if unsure
4. Organising revision notes effectively
5. Practising working under examination timings and conditions
6. 'Buddying up' with a friend or friends on certain revision topics
7. Wherever possible ensuring that an appropriate "Insurance" Institution is confirmed after the 'mocks' on UCAS to assure that an offer can be taken up even if the examination series proves difficult.
8. Having a 'Plan B' in place
9. Eating healthily, sleeping sensibly, rationing 'phones/tablets, and taking regular exercise
10. Speaking with a family member, friend or teacher if worried
11. Being brutally honest about what our best is but also understanding that we can only do our best

### **Year 13 Mock Examinations**

The 'mock' examinations will take place immediately before and after Half Term (Monday 5 to Friday 9 February and (Monday 19 to Friday 23 February) They are arranged over this limited period to both allow students some additional revision time and to cause as little disruption as possible to the teaching and learning ahead of the external examinations in May. **Consequently, students may revise at home throughout the examination period** (but can of course use the Sixth Form Study spaces if that is more convenient).

Whether a student is sitting on an A\*, A\*, A or an unconditional offer it is important that he does himself full justice. By doing so he both prepares himself more fully for the challenges that lie ahead and gives himself the most flattering UCAS points total which graduate employers are increasingly using as discriminators alongside degree classifications.

Happily, the vast majority of students seem to have the 'bit between their teeth' and I encourage them to sustain their efforts. Those who are wavering should follow that positive lead and so create a virtuous circle which will prove both motivating and confidence building for all. It really is remarkable how much can be accomplished between now and the end of the examinations and we urge each student to try their best secure in the knowledge that they will have a very lengthy summer vacation to recuperate and hopefully celebrate a job well done.

Best wishes



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Head of Sixth Form