

16 October 2020

TO ALL Y13 PARENTS/CARERS

Dear Parent/Carer

For some sixth form learners, the national uncertainty surrounding their A-level exams is a cause of stress and anxiety. I want to reassure all of our learners that there are continuing discussions between Ofqual, the government and exam boards about contingency plans which take account of the risk of disruption at an individual, local and regional level. There is a strong focus on the reduction of any further disadvantage to learners and there will be a levelling up process which will benefit learners who stay motivated and work hard this year.

The government has announced that the majority of summer exams are to start on 7 June 2021, with results days taking place in late August 2021.

There is a lot of discussion about making the assessed content realistic by introducing more choice in the summer examinations. This is why it is important that our learners learn the units they study really well, rather than worrying about covering the whole specification. Learners will potentially be given a choice of questions to answer and this means they will be able to choose questions on topics they know well.

Our aim is to support learners to learn units of work well and ensure they have the ability to demonstrate this knowledge in their terminal examinations in the summer. To support our learners, there is a substantial amount of work on Google Classroom.

For those learners resitting GCSE examinations immediately after half term, structured revision is key and learners should be completing the work set by mathematics and English over the half-term break to ensure they are well prepared for the examinations.

In vocational engineering and business courses, learners will be well aware of the assignments that need to be completed in the first week back and can access the multitude of resources on Google Classroom. Completing these over the half-term break will mean there is less pressure when we return.

The mathematics team have created a pack of work based on topics recently covered, along with questions tailored to individual need. The half-term break is an ideal time to reflect on the topics covered in Y12 and more recent work.

The science team have set work on Google Classrooms and have discussed the tasks with learners this week. In biology, learners are to complete questions on muscles and prepare for a test as soon as they return. Our A-level chemists have been working on organics and again, work is available for them online.

In product design, learners are to work on their non-examined assessment project, where they should be looking to complete all of their initial design ideas before we return. They should also consolidate their understanding of the theory lessons from this half-term by revisiting their notes, filing them in order and ensuring they have completed the 'test yourself questions' at the end of each section of work.

Next steps

In the weekly *Sixth Form Matters* bulletin to learners, I have included numerous degree apprenticeship vacancies for next year and hope that those seeking apprenticeships have started their applications.

For those learners applying to university through UCAS, the half-term break is a great opportunity to make decisions about the five universities and courses. The training PowerPoint offers a step-by-step guide to the application process and after the break Dr Sillitoe and Miss Sowden will continue their drop-in sessions and support via email.

Our deadline for UCAS applications is Tuesday, 1 December 2020. By this point, applications should be complete, including personal statements and the five university/course choices. Once learners have submitted their applications, Dr Sillitoe is able to complete a final check and add the school reference and predicted grades. Learners have been reminded that early applications are encouraged as universities start making offers to applicants from November and therefore later applications may coincide with courses that are almost full.

COVID-19

To mitigate the potential spread of COVID-19 in our sixth form bubble, learners will be advised of a number of changes being implemented after the half-term break. Learners will be reminded of the importance of wearing masks at all times outside of lessons and will also be advised to socially distance wherever possible when they are not in lessons; I would ask you to support us by discussing this with your son/daughter. Other changes designed to minimise the number of learners having to self isolate include recorded seating plans, reduced congestion in the dining areas and more areas to work during study periods.

This has been a challenging half-term for learners and staff at the academy and I would like to thank learners and parents/carers for working with us. Learners have made an excellent start to the year and those who work hard can look forward to securing excellent outcomes next summer.

Yours sincerely



Mr P Stanmore CEng MIMechE
Director of Sixth Form