

Dear Parent/Carer

### **Welcome to the Associated Sixth Form**

We would normally invite parents into school at this early stage in the academic year for a presentation in which we set out the expectations of the Sixth Form, explain the shape of Year 12 and discuss ways in which we hope to support students, with your help, through this most significant phase of their education. Unfortunately we cannot host such an event due to the coronavirus restrictions so we hope that the information provided here will help you to prepare for the months ahead with your student.

Needless to say, it has been an unusual start to the term but staff and students have been pleased to be back in school and have been adapting quickly to new hygiene requirements and routes around the school sites. It has been a positive start with students keen to progress in their studies after a long time away and to get started on new courses. We have welcomed around 170 students from other local schools into the Association and have been impressed by the way in which they have settled into their new environment, met new friends and adapted to new teachers.

### **Microsoft Teams**

We are also all getting used to Microsoft Teams, which is proving a useful repository for resources and point of contact for classes and individuals where learning might otherwise be disrupted. Please bear with us as we develop our work in this area. Whilst 'live' streaming of a lesson cannot fully replicate the lesson experience, streaming individual components of lessons has proved very useful (eg. broadcasting a demo or presentation, or running online Q&A); teachers are including these, as needed, in lessons and we will continue to refine our practice to identify the most effective ways of doing this.

Teams is also proving effective as a base for uploading resources and setting and collecting assignments.

### **Rights and Responsibilities**

The Sixth Form is a time of transition and we are keen that students feel supported as they adapt to new challenges and ways of working. Within common structures we work on the principle that everyone is an individual and an exception and will be valued. Student relationships are a strength of the Associated Sixth Form and this extends also to relationships between students and their teachers: we are keen to stress the importance of dialogue in all situations, however difficult that may seem at first. Students should be willing to ask their teachers for support if they are challenged by their studies and to share concerns from outside school if they are likely to impact on their studies.

### **Student Responsibilities**

We expect students to give the first 35 - 40 hours of every week to Sixth Form work including taught lessons, private study in school and homework. All classes chosen must be attended and all agreed meetings with staff must be attended. Students should aim for all assessed tasks and homeworks to be on time and meeting or exceeding their target grade.

Most importantly we would ask students to value one another at all times and act as role models within school and the wider community. This is particularly important at the current time and we ask that students are sensitive to the views of local residents when walking between sites or spending lunchtime off site. We therefore expect students to observe social distancing requirements in the local area and politely to allow members of the public to pass when meeting them on the footpath.

### **The Role of the Senior Tutor**

The Senior Tutor is each student's most important contact point throughout their Sixth Form experience. Senior Tutors are teaching colleagues who have a slightly reduced teaching load and, in most instances, are responsible for one Year 12 and one Year 13 group. They help their tutees to reach their full potential through pastoral support and academic monitoring and support. Senior Tutors visit students during form time and also have a weekly tutorial with their group. The Senior Tutor is the first point of contact if you have any questions about your student's situation and should also be the first point of contact for the student and for subject teachers if there are concerns or positive achievements to be shared. In most cases the Senior Tutor is the person who compiles a student's reference for future applications so it is important that students keep him or her informed of their progress and interests and that they build a positive working relationship throughout the Sixth Form.

If there are any issues you wish to discuss with your student's Senior Tutor please contact them via the Sixth Form Office.

### **Tutorials**

The Sixth Form Tutorial Programme aims to provide students with a comprehensive set of study skills as well as important information relating to personal development. Skills such as time management, organisation, revision and note taking are discussed in the first half term to help students adapt to A Level study. The Careers department introduce themselves after October Half Term and after Christmas students have tutorials on significant issues such as mental health and wellbeing, drugs awareness, healthy relationships, race relations in the UK and LGBTQ+. We take a holistic approach to providing our students with the skills and information they need for their personal development throughout their time in the Associated Sixth Form.

### **Careers Advice and Guidance**

During Year 12, the Careers Department will work with students to help them plan for life beyond the Sixth Form. All students will follow a careers programme which help them explore all Post-18 options be that university, college, apprenticeships and employment or a gap year. Throughout the Year representatives from Higher Education and employment will come into school to advise students on opportunities available and in June we host a Sixth Form Conference where we will start the application process. Our team of Career Advisers can provide ongoing careers information, advice and guidance throughout students' time in the Sixth Form to help them make informed decisions. Students can book career appointments in their non-contact or supervised study periods and parents/carers are welcome to attend these. For further information and to book a careers appointment please contact our Career Advisers on [careersstaff@staidans.co.uk](mailto:careersstaff@staidans.co.uk) or 01423 818534.

## **EEP**

These are hours of fundable activity that are not used to take externally certified qualifications. These hours are also known as planned employability, enrichment and pastoral (EEP) hours. Year 12 students at St Aidan's have Employability, Enrichment and Pastoral (EEP) on their timetable on a fortnightly basis, although when a guest speaker comes into school all students attend the session. The focus of the programme is to provide activities that offer enrichment to the student such as personal and social development. The programme is non-sequential and based around issues relevant to 16-19-year olds and in response to feedback from Student Voice surveys.

## **Attendance**

All parents/carers should have received a copy of 'Promoting Good Attendance in the Sixth Form: A Guide for Parents and Carers' and we hope that you have discussed it at home. Year 12 students are required to be in school throughout the school day with the exception of the lunch hour when they may choose to walk off site. Good attendance at school is essential for student development and achievement and our expectation is that students, parents/carers and school will work together to ensure that students attend school and access the appropriate Post-16 education. There is a strong link between attendance and achievement, with students who attend school being offered access to high quality learning and teaching opportunities which will enable them to achieve qualifications and to access greater employment opportunities. Students' attendance will be closely monitored by their Form Tutor, Senior Tutor and Attendance Officer.

## **Academic Challenge**

A Level and Level 3 Applied courses represent a step up to more challenging concepts and skills from GCSE and students have to adapt to these requirements. Alongside the continuing support of teaching staff, there is greater emphasis on independent learning and an expectation that most students will make good use of their time and work hard to keep on top of their workload. Year 12 students sometimes find it difficult to manage Private Study time on their timetable and it is important that this is used profitably. It would be a good idea to discuss a schedule with your student to plan which subject they will study in each of their non-contact lessons.

Advice on study skills and time management is given during the Tutorial Programme and there is also a programme of Core Learning for each subject which should be used alongside regular homework to develop and consolidate learning.

## **Setting Targets**

The method of setting targets for the Sixth Form is created by an organisation known as Fisher Family Trust (FFT). FFT produces targets by using the national dataset of GCSE results as well as student background information. Thus our students' targets are based on the performance of previous students with similar GCSE attainment, with weighting given to subject-specific results. We also include an aspirational boost to the targets in recognition of the standards achieved within the Associated Sixth Form.

Targets are issued later in the Autumn Term and are used as a benchmark for progress throughout Years 12 and 13.

## **Monitoring**

It is essential that students sustain their efforts throughout the year and we will provide frequent information about their progress.

We conduct an Autumn Monitoring process in November, to confirm that students are settling to expectations and to allow students to consult subject teachers and Senior Tutors.

Following assessments in December and January we issue a Grade Review ahead of Year 12 Parents' Evening at the beginning of February. Internal exams are held in April and May, with external assessments in some Applied General courses and a further Progress Review is issued before the end of the Summer Term.

Throughout the Sixth Form, students should feel encouraged and positive: we hope that they will understand assessments made about them, that they know the ways to improve and that problems are addressed.

If you have any concerns about your student's grades, please contact their Senior Tutor in the first instance.

## **Entry into Year 13**

The majority of our students enrol into Year 13. Where a student's attendance or conduct has, however, not been in line with expectations, the Associated Sixth Form will notify the student and parent or carer, that their place in Year 13 is in doubt. Similarly, where a student's performance in the Year 12 assessments suggests that they are not able to cope with the demands of the course, the student and parent or carer will be notified that Year 13 study may not be appropriate for them. In all cases, the Associated Sixth Form will discuss this issue with the student and parents or carers and explore alternative options, but we reserve the right not to enrol students into Year 13 whose attendance, conduct or progress is not in line with the expectations of the Associated Sixth Form.

## **Overall aims**

Our aim is that all students will enjoy the new social environment, rise to the challenge of higher level academic work, get involved in the life of the schools beyond lessons and grow in confidence.

We look forward to working with you to help your student to achieve the best results possible and to enjoy the final phase of their school career. Please keep in contact with us throughout the year: information will be sent regularly via email but you can also stay in touch on social media.

With best wishes,

C Kidman  
Head of Sixth Form, St Aidan's

N Beetles  
Head of Sixth Form, St John Fisher

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