

September 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

We have been delighted with the way in which Year 13 have settled on their return to school, with students keen to progress in their studies and a developing focus on aspirations and applications after Sixth Form.

We hope this letter explains the shape of Year 13 and ways in which we hope to support students, with your help, through this most significant phase.

Academic Challenge

A Level and Level 3 Applied courses move to more challenging concepts and skills this year 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 grasp the nettle, make good use of their time and push hard for improvements in the standard of their work.

Monitoring

It is essential that students sustain their efforts throughout the year and we will continue to provide frequent information about students' progress, with a Grade Review in November, mock exams in December, a full report in February and a final Progress Review in March. If you have any concerns about your student's grades, please contact their Senior Tutor in the first instance.

Predicted Grades for UCAS and other applications

The grades which teachers submit as predicted grades for UCAS and other applications in September and October are aspirational: teachers are encouraged to be optimistic in support of applications in the hope that students will secure offers which will provide impetus to their Year 13 studies. These grades are not to be regarded as accurate assessments of current or likely achievement. We encourage students to strike a balance between ambition and realism in their applications and to avoid false expectations of grades which are beyond reach, which can cause disappointment on results day.

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. Good attendance at school is important 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.

Home Study Leave (Year 13)

Students are permitted to undertake Home Study Leave where their timetable permits, in agreement with their Senior Tutor and parents/carers once their future plans have been finalised / UCAS forms submitted. They need to have completed a pink Home Study form and returned it to the Sixth Form Office. Home Study is a privilege and opportunity for self-directed learning and may be withdrawn if procedures are not followed properly or a student's academic or attendance record becomes a cause for concern. We hope that you are able to encourage your student to use wisely any additional time spent at home, perhaps introducing a schedule which you can discuss and monitor together.

Careers Advice and Guidance

This is a vital stage in each student's developing sense of their future direction and ambitions. During Year 13, the Careers Department will work with students to assist them with Post-18 applications to university, college, apprenticeships and employment or to make plans for a gap year. Our Career Advisers can provide further guidance on applying for student finance and replying to course and apprenticeship offers. Students can book career appointments in their Private Study periods and parents/carers are welcome to attend these. Resources to assist students with their Post-18 options are all available on the schools website <https://www.staidans.co.uk/careers/careers-year-13/> and further information is provided in weekly notices.

Students applying for university have school deadlines to adhere to and these are as follows:

Friday 24 September for applications for Oxbridge, Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Science

Monday 18 October for all other UCAS courses and UCAS Conservatoires (except music)

Monday 22 November for Foundation Diplomas in Art and Design

For further information and to book a careers appointment please contact our Career Advisers on careersstaff@staidans.co.uk or 01423 818534.

In previous years, our students have been very successful in securing places at their preferred universities or on excellent apprenticeship routes and much of this success is a result of them working closely with the Careers Department and with their Senior Tutors. We hope that you will encourage your student to make the most of the support on offer in this area and in their academic work this year.

Stay in Touch

We look forward to working with you to help your student to achieve the best results possible and to enjoy the final year 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 I Kidman
Director of Sixth Form, St Aidan's

J Sharpe
Director of Sixth Form, St John Fisher

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