



As we prepare for our festive holiday which is always a busy one, we come to the end of another incredibly packed term! A Level courses / coursework / apprenticeship preparation / university applications and interviews are now well-underway and for Year 13s, we return to school with mock examinations. Consequently, the holiday is a well-earned time to relax, to enjoy time with friends and family, but also revision and time management skills will be required! We hope you have a wonderful holiday anyway and look forward to seeing all our students in January, 2020.

*Mrs McMillan and Mrs Helsby*

### **Behaviour Awards and Awards Evening**

Your child once again has received a letter if they were awarded all grades 1 or 2 last half term. The grades are explained below, but a letter rewards excellent attitude and involvement in every lesson. This is a considerable achievement and many congratulations – students with scores of 1.5 or above have received a more personal letter, due to the academic rigour shown. Well done!

<b>1</b>	<b>Outstanding learning</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Good learning</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Passive learning</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Low level disruption</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Persistent disruption</b>

If your child did not receive a letter, then they have received one or more grade 3s or below, indicating a dip in focus. The marks 'reset' each half term, so in January it is the chance to set higher targets and make any necessary improvements. Contact with home has been made for anyone whose marks indicate a serious concern. For the vast majority of students, the new Behaviour Policy reflects our students' impressive effort and consistent commitment.

Many students were also commended for their efforts and aptitude at our Awards Evening on 11<sup>th</sup> December. Many congratulations to all the recipients of the academic awards and also to those students who were singled out for special commendation. With such tough competition, those Sixth Form awards were very heartfelt and meaningful.

Well done to all!

### **Year 13 Mock Examinations**

As already mentioned, Year 13s return to mock exams which run from **Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January to Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup>** the following week. Students have all received personal timetables and seating plans are up in Sixth Form. The exams will take place in the Sixth Form block and when exams are not on, students can revise privately at home on study leave. Anyone who wishes to study in school can of course do so.

**Normal lessons resume for Year 13 on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup>, when full attendance is expected.**

**Year 12 will have alternative private study spaces timetabled during the exam period.**

A pack of revision materials and templates has been re-emailed today and a PPT with useful study apps has been sent also – some of those revision tools are incredibly useful to help plan over this busy period. I would advise leaving coursework tasks entirely and that Year 13 students focus purely on exam revision.

AP1 grades and mock grades will give us a very good indication of where students are at in this critically important year, and this monitoring point will be very important.

### **Sixth Form Parents' Evening**

This will take place on **6<sup>th</sup> February** for both Year 12 and 13. Different to lower school, students make their own appointments with teachers and more information on this will follow in the New Year. This is a critical time to set realistic goals and set targets for the academic year ahead.



## **Year 12 Work Experience**

Work Experience will take place on the week beginning **Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March**. Many students have secured really exciting placements and this should be a very useful week in terms of gaining valuable experiences and considering future career options. Many congratulations to students who have persevered, despite facing setbacks, to obtain a placement that is exciting and aspirational. This process takes time and determination – a personal touch may be required as well as using any relevant contacts - just sending out emails is unlikely to be enough as workplaces are so busy.

The experience is all about showing initiative and drive. If anyone has not yet secured a place, our next 'check-in' date is 16th January. MPLOY will return to school and they can supply work experience places for anyone who has not managed to secure one – this will mean a placement anywhere and may not be linked to your child's future career. This is a last resort rather than a 'fall-back' option.

Mrs Helsby is a fantastic help here, as a former careers teacher, and students need to liaise with her for more advice. She has managed to secure five places at Leighton Hospital which is fantastic for anyone with medical career goals – those students need to formally apply and already have the information. (Well done to those Year 12 students who also attended the Medical Taster Day at Liverpool University.)

## **Year 13 UCAS process**

Nearly 90 applications have now gone and this has taken many hours of preparation, redrafting and planning! We pride ourselves on the quality of our applications and references and many students are sitting on fantastic offers, including unconditionals. There is a 'health warning' that goes with such offers – whilst they are an indication that universities really want you on their course and they can result in less stress and anxiety, sometimes a drop in performance can occur as the pressure for the highest grades possible is removed! Consider these exciting offers carefully but make sure focus is not negatively affected!

Usually unconditional offers mean students have to select that institution as a firm first choice; many universities also offer bursaries and financial incentives to students to keep them on track. Most universities expect you to choose your universities ten weeks after receiving your final offer – so there is flexibility here as some universities issue offers faster than others. Some students who applied before October 15th are still waiting to hear, for example. Application Days are very useful for students to decide on the best place to study. More information on this in the New Year.

Every student who applied for the incredibly highly competitive Medic / Veterinary / Oxbridge courses have been offered interviews, this is a superb achievement in itself!

Of course many students have also had interviews. Mr Lowe, Mr Deakin, Mr Bowland, myself, former Oxbridge students and a GP have been in school to advise and offer mock interviews. For creative subjects this has meant creating a digital portfolio and assembling work as evidence; for Vets and Medics this has involved preparing for rigorous full day MMI interviews and additional tests; our future Lawyers have had to do their LNAT examinations and for Oxbridge students it has meant an intense three day interview process, as well as additional examinations! All of these students will receive news and offers (hopefully) in the New Year and we would like to wish them all the best of luck! This is a very challenging time and you have all been truly amazing!

## **Apprenticeship News**

Mrs Helsby will continue to forward Apprenticeship vacancies to the students who have expressed interest in pursuing this pathway. Students are encouraged to speak to Mrs Helsby if they need further guidance or help applying. Well done to those who attended the Skills Show, where useful contacts and essential information were obtained.

## **EPQ**

This is on hold for our Year 13 students due to the impending examinations, but work is well underway and the emphasis will be on completion as soon as possible after January. Many Year 12s have expressed an interest in this qualification and over Christmas, their preparation should entail reading / research and completing the two, free online courses on Future Learn. These provide guidance on completing the EPQ, with invaluable tips and advice.

## **Term Magazine**

Well done to Nicole and the team for our fabulous new TERM edition! Many thanks to all the journalists, creatives and photographers who have made it happen. Nicole dressed as Anna Wintour for the latest fancy dress day and this seemed highly appropriate – as she is also stylish, highly efficient and a stickler for deadlines! Year 12 will take over the roles in January 2020 after a formal application process. More information after Christmas.

## **Festive Fun**

It's been a lovely end to term with the school Christmas dinner on Wednesday, Fancy Dress Day on Thursday and Christmas Karaoke on Friday. Elf on the Shelf has kept us all amused as he has appeared in numerous surprising and hilarious locations in the Sixth Form block! We hope you have a lovely holiday and we'd like to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

