



Ellesmere

A 7-18 Co-educational School

From the Headmaster
B J Wignall, MA, FRSA, MCM

December 2019

Dear Parents,

Information relevant to ALL parents of Year 11 pupils

I am writing this letter to you as your son/daughter is currently in Year 11, and the following document contains important information that will apply – in one way or another – to all parents of children in Year 11.

I hope that those parents who were able to come to the Year 11 Information Day found it an interesting and enjoyable experience and that it helped them understand what Ellesmere has to offer in the Sixth Form. I think it is fair to say that, historically, pupils who work their way through the College always regard the Sixth Form as “the best bit” of the Ellesmere experience, and I hope that all our Year 11 pupils will have the chance to experience this.

The following document is inevitably relatively bureaucratic and certainly very long-winded, and I apologise for that.

Early in the new term you will receive options paperwork relating to choices for the Sixth Form.

I hope that when it comes you will have an extremely enjoyable Christmas and a Happy New Year.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

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A Woodard School

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR YEAR 11 PARENTS

1. Sixth Form information evening

There will be a Sixth Form information evening on Tuesday 14th January 2020, between 5:45pm and 8pm. The Sixth Form experience at Ellesmere is, as one would expect, quite different from the Middle School experience and while the recent Year 11 information day would have covered some of the differences the information evening should complete the picture. It will allow parents and pupils to take the opportunity to come and meet the Heads of Department and listen to an outline of those subjects being considered in the Sixth Form. There will be the chance to hear from some of our current students about their experiences of those subjects and what they are hoping this will lead to in the future. They can also provide an insight into life in the Sixth Form and all its other opportunities here at Ellesmere. Boarding and day House life in the Sixth Form is quite different from the Middle School and there will be the opportunity for parents and pupils to visit the Sixth Form Houses.

2. Sixth Form: Academic criteria

In order for pupils to progress to Sixth Form courses it is necessary for them to achieve a minimum of 5 GCSE passes at Level 4. Experience has shown that anything less than this presents difficulties in moving onto advanced studies. We expect all pupils to strive to achieve this but we will discuss options with pupils, and their parents, should anyone not meet this requirement, once GCSE results are published.

3. Sixth Form: Attitude criteria

In addition to the GCSE result qualification for entry into the Sixth Form, consideration is also given to whether the College Sixth Form is appropriate for each pupil in Year 11. In some circumstances it may be necessary to take the view that an individual – despite achieving acceptable GCSEs – is not best suited to continuing their education at Ellesmere (the most obvious example of such a case would be somebody who had been persistently unsatisfactory in their approach to work or school rules). This is very rare and we would give advance notice, if a student was likely to fall into that category. The advance notice would take the form of either a term's notice from the College that the student concerned may not proceed to the Sixth Form, or a warning that it is possible that such a term's notice would be given.

4. Scholarships, awards and bursaries

All Year 11 pupils in receipt of merit awards or means tested bursaries will have those awards and bursaries reviewed with a view to us ensuring that it is appropriate for them to be carried forward into the Sixth Form. The vast majority of scholarships and bursaries will be renewed but are – of course, at all times – renewed on the basis of continuing good effort and behaviour. The review process will be completed by the end of the Lent Term at the very latest and parents should only expect to hear on this subject if there is a question as to whether the award or bursary is likely to be renewed.

In order to reward the academic achievements of our top performing pupils we will be awarding scholarships on transfer to the Sixth Form for the top performing GCSE candidates. It is not possible to specify a precise number of scholarships, but up to six scholarships will be awarded for such candidates.

One way of understanding scholarships from the College's point of view, would be to see them as an investment in a future outcome. Academic scholarships, understood in this light, are an investment in the fees to support a student where that student would be expected to do the school great credit by virtue of his or her academic performance. It follows from this that students who (by lack of application) do not maintain a level of performance would have their scholarship removed.

5. Notice requirements

While I hope and expect that all our Year 11 pupils will be looking to stay on at the College into the Sixth Form to reach a natural end point, I need to remind parents of pupils who are considering leaving the College at the end of Year 11, or who are intending to do so, that the contractual requirement for a full term's notice of such a move is one in which the governors – quite rightly – insist. This means that we need to receive notice of intentions to leave before the beginning of the Summer Term. **The requirement to give notice is absolute and applies to all Year 11 pupils**, even those who have initially joined on the basis of a "one-year trial".

If notice is to be given of a pupil leaving then such notice needs to be definite, as we do not accept “provisional notice” for these purposes. If definite notice is given and then there is a change of heart and a pupil wishes to remain at the school then that, of course, is possible so long as the place given up has not already been allocated.

B J Wignall

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