

6<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Dear Year 13 Parents and Carers

We hope your family had a restful summer break. We are very much looking forward to working with our Year 13 students during this crucial year of their education. As term begins, we wanted to let you know the following important information:

### **Rising to the challenge of Year 13 and support available at school**

In our first assembly, we talk to students about the need to make the most of their final year at school and offer advice as to how best to rise to the challenges, in order to have as enjoyable, productive and successful a Year 13 as possible. A healthy balance is essential; there is no doubt that students need to work very hard in Year 13 and put in the hours, but this must be carefully balanced against relaxation time.

We stress to students the need to make productive use of their study periods at school, but also the need to be spending a couple of hours a night at home on their studies as well as significant time at the weekend. Once students complete homework set by teachers, we recommend wider reading to deepen understanding, making condensed revision notes to consolidate learning, focused work on NEAs or coursework, or the completion of past paper questions on the topic the student is studying in lessons.

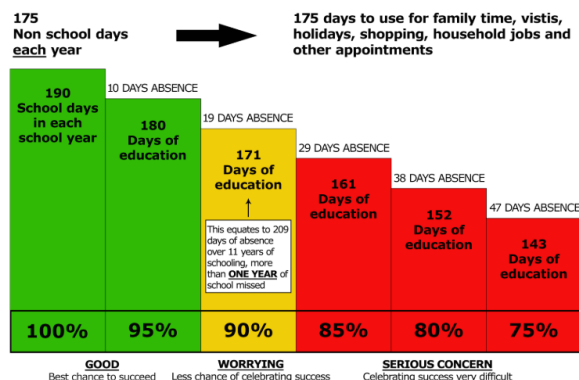
To enable students to get the balance right, we strongly recommend that students keep their part-time employment hours to a minimum or if possible, consider stopping. If a student is struggling pastorally, academically or is not working hard enough at home, please do not hesitate to contact either one of us at school so we can work together to put support in place.

### **Student Health and Wellbeing Support**

We are keen to support students with their health and wellbeing as young adults. As you know, each student has a form tutor who they meet every morning as a first point of pastoral support. As well as either of us, students also have access to our Student Support Officer, Mrs Hay. Mrs Leech is our school medical officer and we also have two school counsellors. Students are welcome to approach any member of staff for support. Sometimes students would rather access support outside of school via their GP or use online services such as Kooth (<https://www.kooth.com/>) and we are happy to help with signposting.

## Attendance and Punctuality

As you are aware, high attendance at school is crucial for success at A level and we want to work with you to ensure the best attendance possible for each student. Recent research of Sixth Form students nationally shows clearly that a student with 95%+ attendance (10 days of absence) is more likely to achieve at least one grade higher in each of their A level exams than their peers with 85% attendance (29 days of absence). Punctuality to school in the morning is also important for starting the day well and universities/employers require us to comment on this in any references we complete for students.



Of course, we understand if a student has a long-term health condition or needs some time off for illness. If a student is not well enough to attend school, please e-mail the school office ([absence@waddesdonschool.com](mailto:absence@waddesdonschool.com)) or select option 1 when calling the school, as soon as possible, on each day of absence. Please mark any correspondence Mrs Long's attention as our Sixth Form administrator or ask to speak to her on the telephone and she can direct your call to someone who can help you.

Where possible, medical appointments should not be made during timetabled lesson time; if a student has an appointment during the school day, we must have an e-mail, phone call or note ahead of time, to authorise the student leaving the school site, for safeguarding reasons. Please note that we are unable to authorise holidays during term time.

As you know, we monitor attendance and punctuality carefully in Sixth Form to support students, and we will be in contact with you by telephone or letter if we are worried, so we can work with you to put support in place to ensure each student gets the most from their education. We will also be in contact to acknowledge strong attendance and punctuality records.

## Year 13 Reports and Parent/Carer Consultation Evening

Please be aware that we will be sending school reports home with students on the following dates: 13<sup>th</sup> November; 12<sup>th</sup> February; 3<sup>rd</sup> April. Year 13 Mock Examination start during the week of 6<sup>th</sup> January, with results on 12<sup>th</sup> February. Year 13 Parents' Evening takes place on 13<sup>th</sup> February.

## Post 18 application support

To build on previous careers work, we will deliver an assembly next week to students with an overview of post 18 application support available at school, as well as key deadlines. Marked first drafts of Personal Statements will be returned this week if they met the summer deadline; once the subsequent drafts are submitted with amendments, we meet with students for one-to-one support.

We registered students for UCAS in June and there is a 'Completing your UCAS Application' guide on ClassCharts which takes students through the completion of their university application step-by-step. If a student is applying for Oxbridge, Medicine, Veterinary Science or Dentistry, the deadline is 15<sup>th</sup> October. We aim to send off all other university applications from mid-October to early December, with the final UCAS submission deadline on 16<sup>th</sup> December. If a student needs to sit a University Admissions Test, they should see the Exams Team at school as a priority.

Workshops on apprenticeships, employment and Gap Year opportunities and applications are delivered into the Spring term and we invite a number of companies and former students into school to

talk to students in assembly, with deadlines usually later in the year. If a student is still unsure what they want to do after Year 13, they are very welcome to make a careers appointment with Mrs Bridges, which you can attend too. Please see here for our Careers Guide for parents/carers: <https://www.waddesdonschool.com/post-18-careers-advice/>

### **Predicted Grades for post 18 applications**

Teachers will be working hard with students to consolidate work completed last year and giving students plenty of past paper practice, including assessments in early October to finalise predicted grades. Once these assessments are marked, teachers will confirm final predicted grades in lessons just before October half term. If a student is applying for early entry for Medicine, Vet Science, Dentistry or Oxbridge, we will let them know their predicted grades ahead of the deadline.

### **Extenuating circumstances for UCAS references**

We will be posting an e-form for students to complete on ClassCharts next week to give students an opportunity to tell us about any significant extenuating circumstances they experienced while sitting their GCSE exams or indeed during Sixth Form, for example, moving schools in Year 11, a long term and serious health condition or a close family bereavement. Universities have asked us to include more details about this so extenuating circumstances can be taken into account for offers and support at university. We encourage you to look the e-form at home and help with its completion, if appropriate.

### **Home Study**

In recognition of the many contributions Year 13 make to our school community as well as extending their experience of independence, we award most students one home study period each week. This started at the end of Year 12 and is linked to strong attendance at school as you know. Home Study usually takes place on a Friday afternoon from 1.50pm, unless the student has a lesson then, in which case it occurs on another specified day of the week. It is important students remember to sign out before going on home study. Students may also be awarded additional home study periods linked to strong reports. Please note that if students start falling behind with their studies or there are issues with attendance or punctuality, home study periods can be withdrawn so we can support students with catching up on their work at school. Students should be in school daily from 8.30am to 3.10pm and should remain on site unless they sign out for an approved appointment, lunch in the village or home study.

### **Driving onto the school site**

If a student has passed their driving test and wishes to park in Waddesdon Manor's Overspill Car Park (a five-minute walk from school along the Greenway), both you and they must sign a school parking e-contract, available from Mrs Long, with regulations outlined to ensure everyone's safety. A reminder that we are able to authorise driving tests which take place during school time, but not the driving theory test, which can be booked outside of school hours. Driving lessons are not permitted during school hours.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact the relevant form tutor, subject teachers or either of us at school.

Yours sincerely

Miss Aldridge  
Head of Year 13

Ms McIver  
Head of Sixth Form