



SIXTH FORM NEWSLETTER



Dear parents and carers,

As I write to you I realise that we are already 9 school weeks into term and time has flown by. The Sixth Form is bigger than ever with almost 240 students currently in Year 12 and 13. It has been great to welcome 28 students from other schools into our Year 12. All of these students seem to have settled very well into our school ethos and it was good to see many of these students getting involved in activities such as House Music or the First XV rugby team within a few weeks of starting term.

UCAS

Year 13 have been very busy with their UCAS applications. The offers that have been coming in are all a little higher than had been advertised and this is almost certainly a reflection of the increased demand for places as potential students rush to complete their applications before the 2012 change to tuition fees. The students in both year groups have been spoken to regarding the changes to tuition fees. For Year 13 students intending to take a gap year the current information I have received is clear that anyone who begins university in 2012, whether they applied in 2010 or 2011 will be paying the revised tuition fees of up to £9,000. Our local MP, Richard Benyon, is visiting in early December for his annual Q&A session with Year 13 as they reach the voting age. It will be interesting to observe how this 'hot topic' is covered during Richard's visit.

Many students who have already applied have received some fantastic offers and it has been really noteworthy how quickly offers have arrived. One student received offers for all five of their university choices within nine working days of their application being submitted. Five students applied to Oxbridge this year and they will discover over the next few weeks if they have been successful in getting an interview. In preparation for this they have been given a workshop from Oxford University about interview skills and Oxbridge preparation.

For those students in Year 13 who don't wish to go to university a work experience placement has been set up to give the students a flavour of life 'on the outside' and prepare them for job applications next year.

Parents Evening

Parents Evening for Year 13 will be held on December 1st in the Graham Taylor building. Students should try to attend with their parents so that they can receive this really important feedback which I hope will be vital in the run up to the January examinations. We will also be inviting all of our Year 12 Level 2 BTEC students and any Year 12 students that we feel would benefit from the extra support that this opportunity will allow. A full Year 12 Parents evening will be held in February.

Volunteering and community work

There are currently around 20 Downs School Sixth Formers visiting the Compton Primary School as part of our enrichment programme. As links between the two schools get stronger it has been great to hear about our students helping out at break times, lunchtimes and even with their bonfire day on November 5th. I have been delighted at how many students continue to volunteer to help out with open evenings. It is so important to develop personal confidence and working with adults and giving talks and tours is a really good way of doing this as well as looking great on any CV.

Baroness Warnock

Baroness Warnock recently visited the Sixth Form to talk to students regarding the work of The House of Lords. The 87 year old peer talked to the students with passion and intellect on issues as varied as university funding, terror laws and the power of The House of Lords to amend parliamentary acts. All members of the audience listened intently and treated Baroness Warnock with real respect and it was an honour to have some so esteemed visit the school.

Pink Day

Our annual Pink Day raised more money than ever this year. With students dressed as 'creatively' as ever it was a pleasure to be around the students with such a fun atmosphere going on. The day raises money for breast cancer research and finished with a quiz and date auction. The quiz was won by the brilliantly named 'Quizzy Rascal'. A date with Tom from Year 13 was the biggest prize on the date auction with over £30 being raised from this treat alone. In total the day raised over £400 which is fantastic.

Prom

The Year 13s have decided, after much debate, to hold their July Prom at the Vineyard at Stockcross which promises to be a truly momentous occasion. The social team have been very busy getting different quotes and liaising with the rest of the year group about their possible choices.

Sport

On the sporting front the first XV have been working hard on the training ground and this has produced a couple of good results. They go into their county cup quarter final v. Forest School from Wokingham full of confidence. The netball team have been taking advantage of the school's new Astroturf and have had a number of fixtures already. Always competitive they seem to be losing by the odd hoop or two in each game. The football team were unfortunately drawn against John Madejski Academy in the county cup- a team made up of ex-academy players who are all doing a BTEC football course and receiving up to 4 hours coaching per day. That the score was only 9-0 is down to the industry and commitment of all the boys who played.

Exams

We now have our dates for the examination results for next summer. A-level results will be out on the 18th August. It is imperative that students attend this day. Issues regarding university entrance and progression from Year 12 to Year 13 will be discussed and decided on these days. If students are absent it is very difficult to consult and work with students as important decisions are made about their future. For students in Year 12 can I also remind parents and students alike that they will be back in school after their AS exams from Monday 13th June until Friday 22nd July and they should not take any holidays during this time if at all possible as events such as field trips and coursework are calendared for this time.

Finally, As you may be aware Dr Oliver is leaving her role as Head of Year 12 to go on maternity leave at the end of term. I am sure you will join me in wishing her all the best. In her absence Mr Johnson, our very experienced and successful Head of Social Sciences, will be taking on the role of Head of Year 12.

Andrew Hartley
Head of Sixth Form