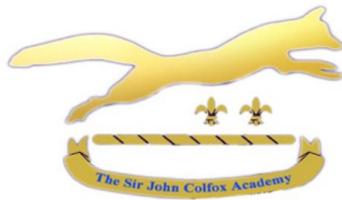


The Sir John Colfox Academy



Inspiring Learning, Achieving Excellence

Headteacher: Mr Adam Shelley MEd, BSc Hons, PGCE, NPOH

Friday, 11 September 2020

Dear Students and Parents,

Welcome back to another school year. Let me first congratulate Year 12 students on their GCSE results, and thank them for choosing the Beaminster Colfox Joint Sixth Form. We also welcome back Year 13, in what is perhaps the most challenging - but also the most rewarding - year of their academic lives. Early impressions of the new Year 12 are very encouraging – they have started their new courses enthusiastically and have already adapted well to the 'new normal'. I wish them all the very best.

Excellent Results Again for Colfox students!

We are thrilled with our A Level results this year. I usually outline outstanding individual performances but, due to the unusual circumstances this year, we do not feel this is appropriate. However, the overall pass rates were broadly 'in-line' with previous years' attainment. Suffice to say, Colfox was rated the top state provider at post-16 in Dorset last year, and this success was reflected in our 2020 results.

Perhaps more importantly, nearly every Year 13 student has progressed on to their university of choice. 20% of students are starting at 'Russell Group' universities and many exciting courses await: Aerospace Engineering, Architecture, Adventure Tourism Management, Musical Theatre, Sport and Exercise Therapy, Costume Production, Marine and Natural History Photography and Biomedical Science, amongst others.

COVID Update

I would like to take this opportunity to thank students for their mature start to the new school term. They have proved themselves to be excellent role models, demonstrating to the rest of the school how to behave with new safety measures being put in place (please see Mr Shelley's letter dated 2nd September). As term progresses, we will be reviewing our COVID policies, and would like to draw your attention to the following:

- As the link bus is used by students from Beaminster, Colfox and Yeovil, masks should be worn on at all times
- Entry to the Sixth Form centre will be via the fire escape from the Sixth Form study room
- The expectation that students remain on site at all times has been relaxed, and students may work from home during independent study periods
- Students should observe the one-way system in place for the whole school
- Students from partner sites should observe host-site policies at all times.

Buses

Young people are required to stay in education, training or employment with training until they are 18. The Joint Sixth Form offer a free link bus for students to travel between Colfox and Beaminster and the bus to Yeovil College is subsidised and organised by the school. However, **there is no automatic entitlement to 'home to school' transport once a student is over 16**, even if free transport has been provided in the past. All school transport to Dorset Schools that have Sixth Form provision is provided by independent bus companies under contract to Dorset County Council. If you wish to purchase a seat on one of these services, you are required to contact the bus company directly. The availability and charges are at the discretion of the relevant bus company: First Group Wessex Buses: 01305 783645 / dorsetschools@firstgroup.com

Bursary Scheme

The Joint Sixth Form have a bursary scheme to help eligible students cover some of the costs of their education. The scheme can help students cover some transport costs, buy books and materials, afford educational visits and buy uniforms (for example). Bursary forms are available from Tracey Smith in the Sixth Form office.

Yeovil College Partnership

A large cohort of students following Level 2 and Level 3 vocational courses have begun their studies at Yeovil College through the Partnership. The Partnership enjoyed excellent results last year, and has gone from strength to strength. Mr Farrow is the temporary point of contact for the Yeovil Partnership (see below). Yeovil College students have also been placed in a dedicated tutor group (again, see below).

Book Deposits

We are now in the second year of the reinstated 'book deposit' scheme, and are now moving to WisePay to make this work. We have asked for £70 to cover books missing at the end of Year 13. If all books are returned at the end of courses, the money is returned. Students will only be able to access course text books on receipt of this deposit.

A Level Choices

Most students in Year 12 are starting three A Levels with some taking four with the option to drop (or continue). Students will be able to sit an AS in the course they are wanting to drop, but please bear in mind that AS grades are only worth 40% of a full A Level and students will need to work independently towards the successful completion of exams. Some students have already changed courses and this is fine – we will help students settle into the courses that are best for them.

Students on 3 A Levels are also expected to take 'Core Maths' (if studying sciences, Psychology, Geography, Resistant Materials or Business) or an 'EPQ' (Extended Project Qualification) if studying humanities and arts subjects. Both courses are 'AS' equivalent.

Study Expectations

The step up from GCSE to working at A Level is probably the biggest single step that students make in their academic lives, including undergraduate study. Students are expected to 'mirror' their contact time with independent study, meaning that for every nine hours of contact time a subject has over two weeks, a student will do **at least nine hours of extra, independent study**. This means that a Year 12 student studying four A Levels will have eighteen hours of contact time a week, which is mirrored. **The working week is therefore at least thirty six hours**. Managing personal time effectively is a priority for students and we will do our best to help them make the most of their time.



Sixth Form Staff

We have made some changes to the Sixth Form tutor team. Sam Morse (12SRM), Roz Ward (12RCW) and Tracey Smith (12TS) will be tutoring the Year 12 students. Gary Littlechild (13GL), Juliet Hicks (13JMH) and Lucy Wright (13LW) have been allocated Year 13 tutor groups. Yeovil College Partnership students are also included in these tutor groups. Initial queries and issues should be directed to tutors. Students see their tutor for one tutorial period per week (Tuesday period 3). **This session is timetabled and compulsory for all students.** Tutors will mentor and monitor progress carefully.

Attendance and Registration

There is no morning registration for Sixth Formers. In its place, students are registered by class teachers at the start of each lesson. Electronic 'fingerprint' registration is currently suspended as a COVID precaution. An excellent attendance record is essential if students are to be successful at this higher level of study. Attendance to all timetabled sessions is absolutely mandatory and if a student's attendance falls below an acceptable level their place in the Sixth Form may be at risk. If a student is absent from school for any reason it is important we are notified in the usual way. If absence is due to sickness, a message should be left via the main office. If it is a planned absence (e.g. a university open day) permission should be sought from the form tutor. Where any student is absent from school without reason, it is our duty to inform you. If not registered for E Contact, please contact Tracey Smith to receive these notifications electronically.

ID Cards

All students will be given identity cards. Students must wear their identity badges at all times, and across both sites. The ID cards will be used to allow students to use the link bus between sites. Students may not be able to travel between sites if not wearing ID. The joint nature of the Sixth Form means the wearing of identity badges is compulsory. Students not wearing ID badges may be asked to leave the site.

Enrichment and Give Back

The 'Give Back' scheme, which expects students to 'give back' some time to the school and community, has been restricted due to COVID. However, I would encourage students to investigate ways in which they can enhance their university applications and personal development by investigating other volunteering opportunities. Activities might include: online community service; The Silver Line (helping to combat loneliness amongst the elderly population); Help from Home ('micro' volunteering); UN Volunteers and even 'Open Mapping' – an online initiative to help map remote areas to assist in disaster relief. There is so much that can be done during this time. Volunteering looks fantastic on applications and helps students develop into rounded, engaged individuals. Tutors are now organising this with students.

Period 3 on Fridays have been set aside for students to engage in COVID-safe enrichment activities including yoga, team sports, board games and fitness. There will be a small cost to some of the activities. All students are expected to take part in an activity each week, which is being organised by Student Leaders.

Student Leaders

Our leadership team of Daisy Parsons, Chiara Sidebotham, Rosie Howell and Amber Case remain in post until January when we will recruit a new leadership team. The leadership team is responsible for delegating the following activities and events: rag week, Sixth Form Council and School Council, representing school houses, organising enrichment and other committees. It is expected that representative members from every tutor group will join one of these groups.



Preparations for University

Year 13 students are now well advanced in researching and completing UCAS applications and writing personal statements. Completing applications early is vital, as universities make offers for courses as soon as applications are received. Courses can fill quickly. Visits to university open days are encouraged and students should keep an eye on the noticeboard and tutor TEAMS pages for opportunities. Year 12 students would be well advised to begin considering their eventual UCAS options even at this early stage. For them, the summer term will be an excellent time to visit universities or engage with remote experiences.

I hope that this information is useful and I look forward to meeting you at some point over the course of the school year. If there are any questions please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours faithfully,



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Tutors

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