



Sheldon School

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14th December 2023

Dear Parents/Carers,

We hope you are all well and looking forward to the Christmas break. We wanted to write to you before the end of the year to highlight some of the great work that has been undertaken in school this term, as well as some forthcoming developments and important information.

We started the year with a Freshers Fair. This was organised entirely by Year 13 students in order to promote engagement with our huge range of enrichment activities. Year 12 learned all about options as diverse as British Sign Language, Ten Tors, Core Maths and volunteering in the local community and I am very pleased that so many are signed up and nearly all are contributing something to the wider community for at least one lesson per week via Project 5000. Another great addition this year was the charity football match against Hardenhuish (with live music and cake stalls). It was entirely student-led and raised over £400 for Cancer Research UK. We also won and there were no injuries so it was a huge success! Our charity fund-raising continued when we raised money for Young Minds (Mental Health Awareness Week) and later in the term Children in Need and Sense UK. We came together as a community to host a number of successful cake sales and quizzes and also a 'Sponge the Teacher' event. These events raised over £500 between them.

Last week Year 12 beat Year 13 in the first Varsity competition of the year. Despite Year 13 dominating the dodgeball, losses elsewhere and in particular after penalties in the football handed round one to Year 12. There will be a chance for Year 13 to redeem themselves in 2024.

Thank you and well done to all those who have participated in the recent Christmas Concert and school production.

We have been extremely impressed by the hard work and dedication of students in preparing to apply for university and other pathways. Many students have already received offers from a wide range of universities including offers to interview at Oxford & Cambridge. We wish you all the best of luck in your applications!

This leads us on to reminding parents of the **Y13 parent information evening on Wednesday the 17th January 2024**. During this evening you will receive further information about the UCAS process and the next steps with regards to university applications, such as how to apply for student finance. We will also be discussing potential options for students who do not want apply for university as well as some advice on how best to revise and prepare for the upcoming internal assessments. For any Year 13 student still planning on applying to university the absolute final deadline is **January 31st 2024** so we would need complete applications at least 10 days prior to make sure everything is ok. There are also events in term 3 to support those applying for jobs and apprenticeships.

With internal assessments in mind, the year 13 exams will be split across two weeks with the majority taking place in the week beginning **January 22nd 2024**. During this week there will be **no Year 13 lessons** as they will be granted **study leave** for that week only. Students are expected to be in school as normal during the week beginning 15th January 2024.

We also need to share with you a key change that will take place from when we return in January 2024. It has been our default position since we returned to school after the pandemic to expect students to be in school for most of their study time. Students have been able to earn home study as they progress but most students have been expected to be in school for most of their study time. After consulting with staff, students and some parents we have decided to change our approach to study time. All the details can be found in the attached document but the key points are as follows:

- Lesson attendance is essential for success and will continue to be monitored rigorously
- Independent study is also essential for success and it is recommended that for every hour of lesson time students should be spending an equivalent amount of time studying independently. So, between 3-5 hours per subject, per week
- Spending study time in school is still highly encouraged but from Jan 2024, students will be able to spend their study time at home OR in school
- Students who do not meet the expectations detailed on the attached document (and shared via assembly this week) will lose this privilege

Wherever possible appointments, driving lessons etc should be made outside of the school day. When this isn't possible, they should be made in study time. Known appointments, absences etc should be communicated in advance via email from a parent to sixthform@sheldonschool.co.uk. Unplanned absences / illness should continue to be reported via 01249 766020 option 2.

Finally, we would like to thank you all for an extremely successful term with the majority of students focused on learning and being their absolute best selves every single day.

We wish you all a very peaceful festive season.

Yours faithfully,



Mr Eugene Spiers
Head of Sixth Form / Assistant Headteacher



Miss Rosanna Lolla
Head of Year 13