



Bay House

School & Sixth Form

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September 2022

To the parents/carers of all Upper Sixth students

Dear Parent/Carer

I would like to take this opportunity to extend a warm welcome back to all parents and carers of students at the Bay House Sixth Form. I hope all students, and their families, were able to enjoy a well-deserved break following a demanding Lower Sixth year and feel rejuvenated for the challenges ahead. The purpose of this letter is to inform you of important issues that will affect your son/daughter in the coming months, both in terms of exam preparation and future prospects.

It is inevitable that many students will already be thinking about their final exams which will occur at the end of the academic year. We understand the hard work already undertaken in Lower Sixth and are eager to maintain this momentum into our students' second year of study. We will be doing all we can to support students during this demanding time, and they will be encouraged to attend all revision sessions offered by their subject staff during the spring and summer terms. We appreciate your support in encouraging your son/daughter to avail themselves of such opportunities, which we regard as an invaluable means of improving examination performance. We expect students to prioritise their commitments so that driving lessons, part-time jobs and social activities do not interfere with their attendance at such classes. Of equal importance is the need for students to be proactive in seeking help when they need it, targeting those areas which require extra work and consolidating what they learn in class by generating detailed, personalised notes from which to revise.

Given the timing of the examinations, the Easter holiday will also clearly provide a significant opportunity for a detailed revision programme. Students are strongly advised to keep their paid work commitments to a sensible level during this period, in order to give themselves adequate time to prepare for this critical series of examinations.

UCAS/Careers

A key priority for many Upper Sixth students this term is the completion of their UCAS (university entrance) application. The aim is for most students to have completed their application by mid-November. They have already received substantial guidance from the Sixth Form team, assistance from their tutors and now have the opportunity to meet with a subject specialist in order to finalise their personal statement. The onus is now on the students to proceed purposefully with their applications, seeking advice as and when needed. Students **MUST** have completed, paid and sent

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their application to the Sixth Form Office by **Friday 11th November**, such that we have sufficient time to process the references before the January UCAS deadline. Students have been reminded that the earlier that their application is completed the sooner it will arrive at the universities to which they have applied. An exception to this deadline exists for those who are intending to submit Oxbridge/Medicine/Dentistry/Veterinary applications. For these institutions and courses, the deadline was **Friday 23rd September**. We are currently processing these. We continue to remind students that it is their own responsibility to establish whether pre-admission tests are required. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of students to register themselves for the relevant test. Any Sixth Formers who are at all unsure about their options post-18, whether they are applying to university or not, are strongly encouraged to book a careers interview with the Sixth Form careers adviser, if they have not already done so. They can do this by emailing careers@gfmat.org.

Finally, I would like to mention two of the factors which we believe have a significant effect on student performance:

The first concerns **home learning and study periods**. Students who wish to perform to the best of their ability are expected to commit to something approximating a standard 40 hour working week – this will comprise lesson time (usually around 14 hours per week) and independent learning. This time includes study sessions which will be added to the timetable soon. These sessions are staffed and registered, and our expectations regarding study etiquette share many parallels with taught lessons: we do not allow the consumption of food; phones should be out of sight; and students should come prepared to use this time productively. We see studies as an ideal way to cope with the demands of independent learning (6-7 hours per subject, per week, which contribute to the aforementioned 40 hour working week) and hope students take advantage of this opportunity. Students who commit to a short working week of 30 or so hours are, in our experience, unlikely to fulfil their potential. A minor difference students will encounter in study periods when compared to taught lessons is that we allow the listening of music through the use of headphones. We understand many students use their phone as their primary device for this activity and we therefore allow these items to be accessed for this purpose. We must emphasise that this should be kept to an absolute minimum and, after a track or playlist has been selected, phones should be kept in a student's pocket or bag.

It is perhaps worth reiterating our view that whilst we acknowledge that many students will want, and usually benefit from, Saturday or Sunday employment, evening jobs requiring a mid-week commitment are not encouraged. In our experience, such jobs place unfair strain on students who then struggle to meet their academic commitments. Likewise, we usually find that students who work all day Saturday and all day Sunday are too tired to commit fully to their studies during the week. We regard 10 hours of paid employment per week as the absolute maximum commitment that a student should undertake. This should then leave adequate opportunity for the time a successful A Level student must commit to independent study each week, and also leave time for relaxation and the pursuit of other interests.

The second issue is that of **attendance**. We continue to monitor student absence very carefully in the Upper Sixth, contacting parents where we have concerns, and believe good attendance to be an essential ingredient of academic success. It is a requirement that Upper Sixth students attend tutor every day. Tutor time allows the time for discussions, for teachers to catch up with students, for important information to be shared and, particularly at the present time, for students to work with their tutor on their personal statements for UCAS and apprenticeship applications. It follows that students are not permitted to take holidays during term time. At an advanced level, it can prove difficult for students to properly catch up on work missed: every lesson counts! With regard to absence through illness, we always appreciate telephone calls from home notifying us of a student's absence. Details of our attendance policy can be found on the school website.

Typically, A level results day is held on the third Thursday of August which means it is likely to be on the 17th of August. It is vital that students are not away during results day because we cannot guarantee

they will get their results in a timely fashion. It also means that we will be unable to properly support students who miss out on a university place and need support with clearing. We would appreciate your support with this matter.

In closing, I wish all students the very best of luck as they continue their final year of advanced study: I hope that they will be ambitious about what they can achieve in the summer and that they will take full advantage of all the help and support on offer. They are a fantastic year group and we have high hopes for them!

Should you require further information on the matters raised in this letter, or any others, please do not hesitate to contact the Sixth Form Office at any time.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stacey Osborne". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent loop under the letter 'O' in "Osborne".

Miss Stacey Osborne
Head of Sixth Form

Important dates for the calendar – 2022/2023

Autumn Term 2022

Half Term	Monday 24th October - Friday 28th October
INSET Day	Monday 31st October
Interim reports sent home	Beginning of December
Mini Mock window	12th December - 6th January
Last day of term	Friday 16th December

Spring Term 2023

First day of term	Monday 3rd January
Mini Mock window	12th December - 6th January
Full reports sent home	Week commencing 20th February
INSET Day	Friday 10 February
Half Term	Monday 13th - Friday 17th February
A-Level Mock examinations	Week commencing 27th February
Parents' Evening	Wednesday 30th March
Last day of term	Friday 31st March

Summer Term 2023

INSET Day	Monday 17th April
First day of term	Tuesday 18th April
May Bank Holiday	Monday 1st May