



From the Headmaster  
B J Wignall, MA, FRSA, MCM

# Ellesmere

A 7-18 Co-educational School

June 2019

Dear Parents,

As we approach the end of Lower Sixth year for your son or daughter I thought it worth writing to cover a number of topics of relevance.

## **Summer Holiday**

I am sure that everyone is looking forward to the summer and enjoying some rest and recreation. However, the summer holiday period is an important one for all of our Lower Sixth students and there needs to be continuing focus on work. For our IB students detailed research and preparation for the extended essay is an absolute must if this important part of the course is to be completed in draft by the start of next term. All students should have a clear work plan relating to their extended essay and need to spend a significant amount of time on working through that plan during the summer break. For our A Level students there is more than enough to keep them occupied in simply preparing for the second year of their course.

## **Academic Awards on transfer from the Lower Sixth to the Upper Sixth**

Up to two awards, usually to the value of 10% of the fees, may be awarded at the end of the Lower Sixth year to pupils not currently in receipt of awards or financial support from the College. Typically these will tend to go to pupils who arrived new in the Lower Sixth and who did not have chance to prove themselves at that stage, although occasionally they can go to students who took their GCSEs at the College but have shown significant development in their Lower Sixth year. The awards will be based upon end of year examination performance and as assessment of performance throughout the year.

## **Prefect selection**

I thought it might be helpful to explain to you the process by which we will choose prefects from the group currently in the Lower Sixth as they move into the Upper Sixth in September. I feel it is particularly important to write to you as almost every year I have conversations with Sixth Formers (and occasionally their parents), regarding their disappointment at not being made prefects. I hope that by writing in advance of any decisions being taken you will be in a good position to understand how we arrive at our decision. I have already spoken to members of the Lower Sixth about our way of selecting prefects.

During this term members of the Lower Sixth have been given various responsibilities in various parts of the school. How effectively they carry out these duties has been monitored. Soundings are taken from the current prefects; all teachers are asked to offer comments on all members of the Lower Sixth on which they have a view; the Housemasters' and Housemistresses' Committee also has a meeting and discusses the candidates under the guidance of Dr Chatterjee, who has responsibility for managing the prefects. As I dictate this, we are approaching the Lower Sixth Leadership training day, and as a result of that we will receive a report on every member of the Lower Sixth from the independent company that runs our training day. We also consider such matters as attendance.

Having taken all these factors into account, Dr Chatterjee and I meet and I come to a decision regarding the appointment of prefects.

As I have already suggested, each year there are people who are disappointed that they have not been made prefects. I always go out of my way to make it clear to members of the Sixth Form that being a prefect is a responsibility rather than a reward, although I quite accept that it is seen as both. Each year we have thoroughly sound individuals who have been disappointed not to be prefects and who ask “what have I done wrong”? The answer to that question is, frequently, “you have done nothing at all wrong”. In addition to the vitally necessary attributes of integrity, honesty and trustworthiness – which I hope all members of the Sixth Form possess – the ability to work in a team is vital. The ability to take on quite significant responsibility, which includes the ability to direct the younger pupils and support the discipline of the school without at any time making misjudgements which exceed authority or make other students unhappy, is also something that is taken into account. An assessment of an individual’s ability to cope with the additional workload without compromising his or her studies is, of course, vital.

I hope that all our pupils leave here with significant leadership qualities, and not being appointed as a prefect does not mean that somebody will not be given responsibility or be trusted during their time in the Sixth Form.

If a good candidate is not made a prefect it is not because he or she has been overlooked, but because we feel that – given the process described above – he or she is not ready to take on the responsibility of a prefect or there are other people who are more ready.

#### **Last Day of Term**

Looking towards the end of term it may be helpful for me to remind you that term ends on *Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> July*. Pupils are expected to be in College in the morning and it is hoped that in many cases that they will be joined by their parents at lunchtime for the annual drinks party on the College terraces – weather permitting. Further information regarding the arrangements for the Saturday of the end of term will come to you nearer the time, but I thought an advance warning/reminder might be useful.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely



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