



Ellesmere

A 7-18 Co-educational School

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

December 2016

Dear Parents,

I am writing this letter to you as your son/daughter is currently in Year 11, and the following document contains important information that will apply – in one way or another – to all parents of children in Year 11.

I hope that those parents who were able to come to the Year 11 Information Day found it an interesting and enjoyable experience and that it helped them understand what Ellesmere has to offer in the Sixth Form. I think it is fair to say that, historically, pupils who work their way through the College always regard the Sixth Form as “the best bit” of the Ellesmere experience, and I hope that all our Year 11 pupils will have the chance to experience this.

The following document is inevitably relatively bureaucratic and certainly very long-winded, and I apologise for that. However, it is devised in an attempt to give parents the information they need so that they can make informed decisions regarding the future.

If any parents have not had a chance to be briefed properly on what is involved in the Sixth Form, or would simply like more information than was provided on the Year 11 Information Day, I know that Mr Wood or any of the Housemasters or Housemistress would be happy to speak with you. If you let my secretary know she can ask them to make contact with you in the new academic term.

Early in the new term you will receive options paperwork relating to choices for the Sixth Form.

I hope that when it comes you will have an extremely enjoyable Christmas and a Happy New Year.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

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A Woodard School

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR YEAR 11 PARENTS

Information contained in this document

1. **Qualifications for entry to the Sixth Form: Academic criteria**
2. **Qualifications for entry to the Sixth Form: Attitude criteria**
3. **Scholarships, awards and bursaries on transfer to the Sixth Form**
4. **Planned change to day/boarding status**
5. **Pupils considering leaving the College following their GCSEs**
 - i) **Notice requirements**
 - ii) **Scholarships and bursaries**

1. Qualification for entry to the Sixth Form: Academic criteria

In order for pupils to progress to Sixth Form courses it is necessary for them to achieve a minimum of 5 GCSE passes at Grade C. Experience has shown that anything less than this inevitably leads to failure in the Sixth Form, and that a minimum threshold of 5 Cs is, therefore, applied in the pupils' best interests.

Each year the qualifying criteria can cause worry for parents who fear that they need to give notice in case their sons or daughters do not achieve 5 Cs at GCSE. Notice for such an eventuality is not necessary and notice should only be given (please see below for further information on the giving of notice) where there is an intention to leave the school regardless of GCSE results.

Of course, we hope all our Year 11 pupils will achieve the necessary grades to enable them to move to the Sixth Form. In reality, in most years there are a small number who do not quite make it. In such circumstances academic staff will be available to discuss options and to offer advice, either on education elsewhere or even, where it is judged appropriate, re-sitting Year 11 to secure better GCSEs.

2. Qualification for entry to the Sixth Form: Attitude criteria

In addition to the GCSE result qualification for entry into the Sixth Form, consideration is also given to whether the College Sixth Form is appropriate for each pupil in Year 11. In some circumstances it may be necessary to take the view that an individual – despite achieving acceptable GCSEs – is not best suited to continuing their education at Ellesmere (the most obvious example of such a case would be somebody who had been persistently unsatisfactory in their approach to work or school rules) and in such cases it would be best if an alternative Sixth Form education were sought. In any one year the number of such cases would be very small (often zero), and in all such cases we would give advance notice, usually in the first half of the Lent term, if a student was in that category or was likely to fall into that category. The advance notice would take the form of either a term's notice from the College that the student concerned may not proceed to the Sixth Form, or a warning that it is possible that such a term's notice would be given.

3. Scholarships, awards and bursaries on transfer to the Sixth Form

I will write next term to parents of pupils in receipt of merit awards or means-tested bursaries to let them know whether the award or bursary will continue into the Sixth Form. The vast majority of bursaries and scholarships will be renewed, but are – of course – renewed on the basis of continuing good effort and good behaviour.

In order to reward the academic achievements of our top performing pupils we will be awarding scholarships on transfer to the Sixth Form for the top performing GCSE candidates. It is not possible to specify a precise number of scholarships, but up to six scholarships will be awarded for such candidates.

One way of understanding scholarships from the College's point of view, would be to see them as an investment in a future outcome. Academic scholarships, understood in this light, are an investment in the fees to support a student where that student would be expected to do the school great credit by virtue of his or her academic performance. It follows from this that students who (by lack of application) do not maintain a level of performance would have their scholarship removed.

4. Planned change to day/boarding status

Unless notice is given (please see below) Year 11 pupils will transfer into the Sixth Form with their status as day or boarding pupils the same as it was in Year 11. This means if you wish to consider your son or daughter transferring from day to boarding or boarding to day we need to know in advance, and a term's notice is required of such a transfer (you will be familiar with this from the parent contract).

5. Pupils considering leaving the College following their GCSEs

i) Notice requirements

I need to remind parents of pupils who are considering leaving the College at the end of Year 11, or who are intending to do so, that the contractual requirement for a full term's notice of such a move is one in which the Governors – quite rightly – insist. This means that we need to receive notice of intentions to leave before the beginning of the summer term. The requirement to give notice is absolute and applies to all Year 11 pupils, even those who have initially joined on the basis of a "one-year trial".

If notice is to be given of a pupil leaving then such notice needs to be definite, as we do not accept "provisional notice" for these purposes. If definite notice is given and then there is a change of heart and a pupil wishes to remain at the school then that, of course, is possible so long as the place given up has not already been allocated.

ii) Scholarships and bursaries

I should point out that in circumstances where notice is given and then withdrawn (as outlined above) the place in the Sixth Form would actually be a new place and any bursary or scholarship funds attached to a particular pupil would have been removed at the time of the receipt of notice. It would, of course, be possible for a further application for a bursary or scholarship to be made, but as bursary and scholarship funds are limited, there can be no guarantee of success in this respect.

B J Wignall

December 2016