4TH September 2020

Dear parents/carers**,**

I am writing to inform you that for the next academic year I will be the senior leader responsible for Eckington Sixth Form. I am delighted to be taking on this role and hope that I can help support both you and your child in their last year.

This is an incredibly important time for your son/daughter and whilst we recognise our students are independent young adults, I have no doubt that you, as parents, can and will play a vitally important role over the next two years. We want to keep you involved in your son/daughter’s education as much as possible.  To this end, we have set up an Eckington School Sixth Form twitter account, Eckington6thform, which should keep you informed of important information and updates. Please follow us if you can.

For you to support your son/daughter throughout this year I wanted to outline a few important messages and key dates.

Firstly, students at Eckington Sixth Form are required to do 15 hours of independent study each week. This equates to 5 hours per subject. Students will be able to do approximately half of this time in school during their directed learning periods but will still need to do a large proportion of this at home. Whilst we understand that students may need to get a part time job, we recommend that students should work no more than 10 hours per week and that they do not attend employed work during school hours. Attendance and punctuality are of paramount importance for your son/daughter to succeed. It also ensures that they are in good routines when they progress on to their next stage of education/employment. We, therefore, aim for your son/daughter to have at least 96% attendance and will require them to make up time if they are late to school.

Secondly, your child will have a number of assessments throughout the year for teachers to monitor and address gaps in their learning.  However, the following dates are the main calendared assessments for all subjects:

1. Monday 15th September 2020 – Friday 24th September 2020

2. Tuesday 10th November 2020 – Friday 20th November 2020

3.Monday 15th March 2021– Friday 26th March 2021 (PPEs)

During these assessment times we would expect students to be studying for longer periods than normal.

Thirdly, in the next few weeks/months your son/daughter will be making important decisions about their future. If your child is not going to University we will put them in contact with our careers officer so that they get the advice they need throughout the year.  If your son/daughter is going to University then the next few months are crucial. Many students have already logged in to Uni frog and UCAS. If your son/daughter has not yet done this they must do so by the end of this week (Friday 11th September 2020). The sixth form team will be guiding them through the UCAS process over the next few months. Students will need to have decided on what course they would like to study and what universities they would like to attend. It is recommended that students attend open days, that this year will largely take place online. If your son/daughter is applying for Oxford or Cambridge or a medicine, veterinary or dentistry or Medicine Science degree then their UCAS application must be submitted by 8th October 2020 in order for the school to check applications and write references, before submitting by 15th October 2020. Mr Wright will be individually guiding these applicants through the process.  All other applicants have until 2nd December 2020 to complete their applications so that the school can check/improve applications and write references so that all applications can be submitted to UCAS by 15th January 2021. The sixth form study area will be open Monday to Thursday evenings, throughout the year, from 3.15pm - 5pm.  This will provide students with a place to work on their UCAS personal statements or on any other school work.

Fourthly, in order to support your son/daughter please attend their parents evening on Tuesday 8th December 2020 at 3.25pm – 5.30pm.  This will give you the opportunity to speak with teachers about your son/daughter’s progress.  More information will be provided nearer the time.

Finally, we hope that it will be business as usual this year. However, we need to be prepared in case there is another lockdown.  Please be aware that in this instance we would ensure that work is set via one drive, that students can communicate with their teachers via email and they will be able to participate in lessons via teams to maximise learning.

If you have any questions or queries regarding your son’s/daughter’s studies or wellbeing please do not hesitate to contact either Mrs Carlile or myself who will be more than happy to help.

Yours sincerely

Katherine Needham

Senior Leader responsible for Eckington School Sixth Form