

**Dear parents/carers,**

I hope that you and your families have had a good summer and that your son/daughter has had a good rest in order to tackle the challenges of this very important year ahead.

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

Firstly, I wanted to remind you that 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. At times, during Y13 you may find that your son/daughter may do more hours than this. 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 several assessments with frequent feedback 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 13<sup>th</sup> September 2021 – Friday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2021
2. Monday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2021 – Friday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2021
3. Monday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2022– Friday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2022 (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 University is your son/daughter's back up post 18 choice we will put them in contact with our Careers Officer or Employer Engager Manager so that they get the advice they need throughout the year about jobs and high level degree apprenticeships. We expect that all students will apply for university, even if it is their back up and therefore the next few months are crucial. 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 8<sup>th</sup> October 2021 in order for the school to check applications and write references, before submitting by 15<sup>th</sup> October 2021. Mrs Roberts will be individually guiding these applicants through the process. All other applicants have until 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2021 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 15<sup>th</sup> January 2022. 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. We would encourage all Y13 students to take up this opportunity.

Fourthly, in order to support your son/daughter please attend their parents evening on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2021 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 about whether this will be held in school or virtually.

Finally, we hope that it will be business as usual this year. However, we need to be prepared in case there is another lockdown or if your son/daughter needs to self isolate. Please be aware that both students and staff are in a very good position now to swap to virtual teaching immediately. Your son/daughter will be working on their own device regularly and will be very used to using TEAMS to access posts, files and assignments. If self isolating, they should be able to attend lessons from home via TEAMS too.

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 year. We want to keep you involved in your son/daughter's education as much as possible. We will mainly communicate via email but if you need to speak to us please give us a ring. We also have an Eckington School Sixth Form twitter account, Eckington6thform, which should keep you informed of important information and updates. Please follow us if you don't already.

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

Yours sincerely

Katherine Needham  
Associate Assistant Principal

Andrea Roberts  
LoSD Y13

