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September 2017

Dear Parents/Guardians

The sixth form at King's provides your son with a secure and structured environment in which to reinforce and develop the intellectual and interpersonal skills that will lead him towards full independence and success at university and/or in the workplace. We warmly welcome students from other schools this term too - their predecessors have invariably achieved strong A-level results and successfully pursued their chosen pathway whether in employment or at leading universities, so they have much to be confident about.

The school has made every effort to accommodate the needs of individual students but where subject blocks preclude this, they may have to either study their 'fifth choice' subject or embark on a three academic subject programme of study with its inherent risk in the event of one of those subjects to be a problem. The return to fully linear A2 examinations with no A/S at the end of year 12 means that all external examinations now take place in the summer of 2019. This will demand that students have a secure knowledge and understanding of much greater volumes of subject content than in previous years. Moreover, with its removal nationally, students will no longer have the additional flexibility and 'insurance' that General Studies A-level has offered in the past. So it is paramount that students do not underestimate the need for consistent and persistent routine rigour in lessons and independent study time. Equally important is the right balance between *Facilitating* and *Non-Facilitating* subjects in line with the guidance published in the Options Booklet last year.

Formal feedback of student progress starts with CAT1 which provides an opportunity, within the constraints of the timetable, for students who are demonstrably struggling in a subject to have their study programme modified. The same process may apply to other students at CAT2 but, for obvious reasons, the ability to make such changes reduces over time and may prove impracticable beyond early 2018. Final feedback this year will come via the summer examinations when a student whose results confirm a serious lack of progress on a course may need to change their study programme simply to ensure that they secure the best possible results in June 2019. We are proud of our very high retention record in the Sixth Form which reflects our pastoral support in successfully guiding students towards the next stage of their careers and full independence.

Happily, as parents you can contribute very significantly. Your son needs at least as much support and guidance now as he has ever done. Of course, as with us, the art is to provide him with that sense of support and guidance without denying him his sense of growing maturity and independence. Students find that the more responsible, committed and mature they are in the sixth form, the greater the freedoms they will enjoy. Similarly, the more diligent, co-operative and academically proactive they are the more relaxed and enriching their relationships with teaching staff tend to become. In short their experiences and successes in the sixth form will be based on partnership.

As a sixth form student your son acts as a role model for younger students. He will in many ways be more influential than parents and staff in shaping their behaviour and attitudes and that is why we value positive examples so highly. This is particularly true after a summer in which the school has continued to re-furbish and improve its facilities to a standard that the whole community richly deserves but which we must now work hard to preserve. We hope too that your son will be keen to contribute to the rich and diverse cultural, sporting and social life the school offers. However, as the demands of university admissions' tutors and employers become ever greater, and the costs of a degree significantly higher, work must be the focus of his life in the sixth form.

Experience shows us that if his work is going well, so will your son's life be. It is essential that once the 'honeymoon period' inevitably wears off he routinely gives each subject his full commitment both in lessons and independent study time. To facilitate this, the Sixth Form Study Centre on the ground floor of the Newton Block is an excellent resource. It is critical that any student with elements of course work or other practical work completes it to the highest possible standard and in a timely fashion. Working ahead of deadlines enables students to receive the greatest allowable support and guidance from subject specialists and we urge parents to monitor the time lines to enable maximum time for the revision period ahead of any CATs and end of year examinations.

Many of the difficulties that arise in the sixth form are attributable to poor communication for whatever reason. With this in mind we enclose a slightly adapted copy of 'Expectations of a Sixth Form Student' which students were talked through as part of their induction. It provides an accurate outline of what your son should be doing. It might usefully be kept on a notice board as a reference point without having to seek clarification from school. Another change of emphasis in the sixth form as students mature, and particularly in Year 13, is that we try to discuss routine matters arising directly with students and expect them to share this information with parents. Of course we will also make contact with home directly should circumstances demand. We are sure that we can depend on your support in reinforcing and meeting these expectations particularly in relation to attendance, punctuality, appearance, independent study and understanding that all Y12 students must remain on site each day (with the exception of Lunchtime and Games) and must 'thumb out' and 'in' at the school gates when leaving or returning to the premises.

We are well aware of the many pressures that young men can experience and firmly believe that the old adages of 'work hard: play hard' and 'you can only try your best' represent as good a way of coping with them as any. It is essential that your son and you all feel confident about approaching us should he experience any difficulties so that we can find ways of resolving them in a timely manner. We look forward to working together to help your son to happily meet his personal, academic and career goals. That process should have already begun.

Yours sincerely



N C Barton  
Assistant Head  
Head of Sixth



N O Whales  
Assistant Head of Sixth  
Head of PE & Games



## Expectations of a Sixth Form Student 2017-19

<p><b>Attendance</b> (absence notes:- <b>Appointments;</b> <b>Holidays etc)</b></p>	<p>Patchy attendance is the main reason for poor performance. Your son should only take time off school if genuinely ill. In that eventuality he must produce a self-certification note (available via the 6<sup>th</sup> Form Centre) explaining the circumstances of his absence. Medical, dental and driving appointments should, where possible, be arranged outside school time or in the lunch hour. Likewise holidays of any sort are discouraged. If absence is unavoidable your son should as a matter of courtesy speak with the staff concerned and ensure that he makes good any missed work as soon as possible.</p>
<p><b>Punctuality</b></p>	<p>To be an effective sixth form student your son is expected to be at school for registration at 8.45am and 1.30pm for a 1.35pm start) and ALL timetabled lessons including Independent Study at the prescribed time. As those students who work part time know, it is a minimum expectation of <u>all</u> employers too! (In the mornings, students taught at KGGS must ensure that their Form Tutor is aware for registration purposes).</p>
<p><b>Deadlines</b></p>	<p>Deadlines, particularly for coursework MUST be met (Taking time out of school 'sick' to catch up, damages your son's prospects in his other subjects.) As a sixth form student your son will have greater responsibility for organising his independent study time and must ensure that he builds in sufficient time to manage work in ALL his subjects.</p> <p>As a general rule 'little and often' is more effective than the intermittent 'Blitz'!</p>
<p><b>'Homework'</b></p>	<p>A good student who works well in class should do the equivalent of <u>about</u> 7hrs homework Monday to Friday and <u>about</u> the same over the weekend.</p>
<p><b>Appearance</b></p>	<p>Thankfully the majority of students share a pride in their appearance. They are expected to wear the appropriate school uniform smartly. We particularly welcome parental support in the following areas:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Clean, well groomed hair in accordance with the school rules (no extremes of length, style or colour) If your son is in any doubt he should confirm the situation with NCB or NOW before experimenting.</li> <li>2. Blazer (NOT topcoat) to be worn in school.</li> <li>3. Appropriate school jumpers (NOT fleeces) to be worn in school.</li> <li>4. Top button done up, tie tied to cover top button and shirt tucked in.</li> </ol> <p>In short we expect students to present themselves as they would do in a professional, 'uniformed' organisation.</p>
<p><b>Employment</b> <b>Extra Curricular</b></p>	<p>Work experience paid or otherwise and sporting, cultural and social interests provide invaluable experience and transferable skills. However, it is essential that your son finds the right balance. If there is a conflict of interests his academic work should be given priority.</p>
<p><b>Games</b></p>	<p>All students participate in their elected activity on a Wednesday afternoon and will be registered in their respective groups. They should always bring the appropriate kit. Only the Head of PE will decide if a game is affected by bad weather. If a student is certified 'off games' he must present himself with note/certificate to the teacher in charge. Should a student wish to change his games options, he must establish if there is room in his 'new' option, before asking to leave his existing one.</p>
<p><b>Timetable</b></p>	<p>It would be most helpful if you were fully aware of your son's timetable and any subsequent amendments if he changes course. In the lower sixth ALL independent study time takes place at school. <u>No</u> Lower Sixth student can be legitimately working at home during the school day unless specifically instructed by the school.</p>
<p><b>Assemblies</b> <b>Tutor Periods</b> <b>Noticeboards</b></p>	<p>A responsible sixth form student will always be fully aware of what is happening within the school. Essential information is disseminated daily in tutor periods, twice a week in assemblies and on the sixth form notice board outside the main administration block.</p> <p>Ignorance can never be used as a defence!</p>
<p><b>Telephone</b></p>	<p>If ever you feel the need to discuss matters with us please contact your son's form tutor, Mr Whales, Mrs Heather Brown (6<sup>th</sup> Form Admin Support) or myself via the school office. You <u>should</u> be able to guarantee making contact 8.30 - 9.15am and 12.30 - 1.30pm.</p>