

Dear Year 12 Students

What a busy half term this has been. I am impressed that so many of you achieved impressive results in your January mocks and wish you luck with your upcoming internal and external assessments. You have received your reports, and made decisions regarding Year 13 courses and AS qualification entries. Where an intervention interview has followed your report, we have been impressed with your willingness to commit to an improved work ethos. In Year 13 most of you will follow 3 courses to full A level, and these grades will be the ones that university, degree apprenticeships and employment offers for 2024 will be made on. I'm also delighted that we've been able to get back to lots of the academic and extracurricular activities that make up the rich tapestry of sixth form life; preparing you for academic success and life after A levels.

### AS Entries and Dropping Courses

At Durham Johnston Sixth Form, we encourage you to study 4 AS courses in Year 12 for a number of reasons, including helping you choose the best 3 to take forward into Year 13, for assessment in summer 2024. For the courses you are not continuing with to full A level, you have been entered for an AS qualification where we have evidence to support this. Where you are sitting the external AS exam you will not need to be in lessons for any subject you are definitely dropping at AS level, including being confident of success in your other courses. This allows you to fully focus on your core courses where you will be making progress with new content. As always, there will be ongoing assessments in these subjects, allowing you to demonstrate your developing competence and confidence with your core A levels. UCAS references and predicted grades will take account of your continued progress. Where your mock exams showed concern regarding your progress so far, the April – June / July period is so important in turning things around and I will be asking your teachers to identify any student they still have concerns about in early July. These students and parents will be contacted; you will not be able to continue with courses where you are unlikely to achieve a grade.

### Academic Progress

Although you will be making progress with content, your A level assessments throughout Year 13 (next mock period will be end of November 2023) will reflect the linear nature of your exams next summer and will therefore cover work you have covered so far. It is important to build consolidation of **all** work covered into your regular study routines. In assemblies and PHE, we looked at other academic opportunities including EPQs and FutureLearn courses. These are some links I have shared with you previously:

- EPQ – <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/projects/project-qualifications/EPQ-7993>
- FutureLearn - <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/categories>

### What's Next (PHE)

Your timetabled lessons to help you research your options for after A levels restart in June. Here are some of the things we have and will be exploring in our PHE programme.

- Why consider university – **what is right for you?**
- Types of courses / universities – **what is right for you?**
- Alternatives to university, including degree apprenticeships. These are growing in popularity, and worthy of exploration.
- **Measure twice – cut once.** The importance of *research* to make *informed* decisions. E.G. – check your emails (& the weekly notices when you return) for opportunities / experiences – including virtual work experience. Also, lunchtime / afternoon sessions with universities / apprenticeship / studying abroad opportunities.
- How to apply – UCAS.
  - Sign up for UCAS convention / exhibition & print / copy your individual ticket - <https://www.ucas.com/events/ucas-discovery-newcastle-2023-419736>
  - UCAS Hub – for individual sign up. [Sign in | UCAS](#) From 16<sup>th</sup> May you can start filling in your application form (Undergraduate Apply 2024 – BUZZWORD 'Johnston'), but I suggest you focus on exams at the moment.
  - Personal Statements – examples and top tips.
  - Understanding your school reference.
- Finance – student loans, budgeting & beyond.
- Interviews – university & employment.
- Living independently: with others, healthily & respectfully. This includes safety and consent.

## Key Dates / Arrangements to Assist Planning

- **15<sup>th</sup> May** – exams start. The Sixth Form Area will relocate to Mowbray and lockers will only be available at the start and end of the day. To accommodate Year 11 exams, there are a number of afternoons where we will need Mowbray, and so any student on private study on the following afternoons (only) can sign out and study at home.

**If you are on Private Study periods 4 & 5, you may study at home:**

- Monday 15<sup>th</sup> May
- Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> May
- Friday 19<sup>th</sup> May
- Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> May
- Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> June
- Friday 16<sup>th</sup> June

- **15<sup>th</sup> May** Also, the shape of the day changes:

**Shape of the day changes for 3 weeks:**

- Tutor and Period 1 - no change.
- 9.45am - 10am - Break.
- 10am - 11am - Period 2.
- 11am - 11.30am - Lunch.
- 11.30am - 12.30pm - Period 3.
- 12.30pm - 12.45pm - Break.
- 12.45pm - 2.45pm - Periods 4 & 5 - no change.

- **26<sup>th</sup> May** – Newcastle University visit.
- **15<sup>th</sup> June** – internal mock examination week.
- **22<sup>nd</sup> June** – UCAS convention – an important part of your research for what you might want to study from autumn 2024 – plan your visit. No exams that day, buses leave at 10.40am for the journey to Newcastle and depart Newcastle at 1.30pm for the return to school.
- **27<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> June** – Oxford residential visit.
- **30<sup>th</sup> June** – no sixth form lessons – Year 11 Induction Day. Your focus on this day should be researching next steps. There are a number of local university Open Days on this day – sign up.
- **3<sup>rd</sup> July** – an extended workshop as part of our consent / safeguarding programme.
- **4<sup>th</sup> July** – an afterschool Parent Information Evening – focusing on next steps. We cover this in PHE so there is no expectation that you will attend with parents, but of course, you are welcome to.
- **W/c 10<sup>th</sup> July** – your final report for this academic year. Entry to Year 13 courses requires the potential to succeed at full A level.
- **13<sup>th</sup> July** – Oxbridge – parental webinar hosted by Mr Wilbraham.
- **W/c 17<sup>th</sup> July** – this is Wellbeing Week for younger students and there are no subject lessons. As discussed in assembly and PHE, organise yourself with a sense of purpose. Relevant activities include:
  - Work shadowing. This links with our 'show – don't tell' theme – evidence of your interest in a given career / course.
  - EPQ – a great opportunity to make significant progress.
  - Future Learn courses.
  - NEA (coursework).
  - Getting involved, perhaps helping staff with younger pupils.
- **17<sup>th</sup> August** – results of any external AS exams issued.

## Other Opportunities

You will shortly be the most senior members of our school community (approximately 1700 students). Look out for further information on:

- Head student roles
- Student Associate Governor roles
- Sixth Form Committee – what do you want to be remembered for?
- Subject Ambassador roles
- Societies – leading and active roles in
- Mentoring others.....

As always, if you have any questions, please come along and talk to me or Mr Wilbraham.

Regards

Mrs Lennon