

## **KS5 Parent and Carers Forum – 15 September 2021**

### **Timing of forums**

It was raised whether the time could move after the work day so those working can attend. This has been raised before and unfortunately to guarantee staff and trustee attendance it needs to remain first thing. However, questions can be submitted in advance and a summary will always be circulated afterwards so that you do not miss out. As always if you have any specific questions at any time during the year, please do not hesitate to contact the school

### **Queries around the process for new joiners in sixth form**

A few new parents were in attendance who raised some suggestions in relation to the process for new joiners.

It was confirmed that sports day being on the first full day of the year was extraordinary and would not happen again in the future. The last two years' events have been cancelled and the whole school community were promised that it would run on the first day so that they didn't miss out completely. We hope the normal sports day will happen at the end of the academic year as normal.

All new students were given tours of the school on the Monday and Thursday of the first week. In relation to communications to new joiners, it was confirmed that the school is only sent the contact details given on the Kent Choices site so if the student's email is given that is where communication should go. Once registered, students or parents should have received the welcome pack including information on uniform and the school day. We value the contribution of all new students- if any are not feeling very settled then please do contact the form tutor or student services. We appreciate it can be difficult to move into a school where the vast majority of students are already very settled and have been together since they were 11 years old, made harder by the pandemic where open evenings and similar events were not available.

There was a query around the induction week for sixth form held for internal students at the end of year 11. It was confirmed that this was not materials from the course but taster sessions for them to understand what A level subjects were liked. New parents asked that staff did not refer to this week moving forward so that the new students did not feel left out and it was agreed this would be passed back to staff.

There was also a query about boys in the sixth form and their club provisions- Mrs Clark highlighted that we do not differentiate between boys and girls, but they are welcome to have access to balls at lunchtime. It will be raised if they can have access to the sports facilities in free periods and if there are any clubs they would like to see happening this can also be looked into.

The UEFA football cup was introduced last year and will continue this summer as an interhouse activity.

## **EPQs**

The process of EPQs was raised and it was confirmed that they are submitted in year 13 but year 12s are asked around spring if they would like to take it. To date no Weald student has ever been told they could not take it due to lack of space. Some students do start the EPQ but then feel they don't have capacity to finish so generally only the most dedicated will see it through to the end.

It is a topic of the student's choice that is worked on in the style of an academic paper with supervisor support. There are set times in the year where work needs to be submitted by via Project Q. Mrs Butler is now in charge of EPQs and will be giving the deadline dates. Mrs Butler will be able to ensure that the EPQs are running smoothly and efficiently.

## **A Levels**

The school does not know how these are going to run this year. The impression we are getting is it may be the hybrid model that was initially suggested for last year's cohort. The students may know more about the topics that are going to be examined.

There was some discussion around predictive grades (used by early applicants for their UCAS applications) and expected grades.

Some parents queried when they would know the expected mock timetables and realised they had missed the email that had year group videos with all these details. It is expected that parents read all communication sent by the school but if you ever miss anything then the letters section of the website has all communication and is your first port of call. Please can we reiterate that you should read all letters sent by school since they are all important and if parents fail to read these they may miss very important information.

From a safeguarding perspective- we would also like to confirm that emails on issues such as the sexual abuse message sent last week are regarded by staff as well as the trustee board as vital for parents to engage with. We were concerned to hear that parents are deleting them on sight unread based on the subject heading. We would ask that parents read all communications from the school and not just the ones related to academic matters to ensure that their children are kept safe. We do try to keep emails to a minimum but anything sent out we presume that parents have read and noted.

It was confirmed that UCAS offers have been very slow this year and it is uncertain the impact of deferred entry on the current cohort. There are weekly meetings for Oxbridge/Medic/Stem students to help with their early applications.

Referees are the head of department that has the closest link to the subject that they want to study at university. We have an ex-lawyer who is a teacher who does the law applications. If there is not a natural subject head then it will be a form tutor or other relevant person that knows the student. It is mainly based on their subject reports together with an interview and personal statement to pull it all together.

It was asked what work would be used if TAG were used again. It was confirmed that it is all work and not just a few pieces. All work is also rated depending on how reliable it is (high, medium and low) depending on whether it was at home or in exam conditions.

PPEs are in January for year 13 together with some study leave once they start and that ends when 75% of exams are done. It is hoped this will be in the sports hall but depends on restrictions at the time and may need to be in smaller groups.

The government are keen to revert to 2019 grade boundaries but unlikely this will happen for the 2022 and 2023 cohorts.

### **Year 13 teachers having reduced admin roles**

A parent asked if year 13 teachers could spend less time doing other duties. It was confirmed that at Weald our sixth form students get more face to face time than is normal at 12 hours per subject. So there should be enough time in lessons but they can always email staff for any assistance. If replies are not being received or take a long time then please do let school know.

### **Mixing students in years 7-11**

One parent requested that all year groups were mixed annually to prevent friendship issues. For every child that likes this there is one that doesn't. It will be discussed again with SLG. However, from year 10 all students start to be mixed due to GCSE options so this does already happen.

### **Careers advice**

It was confirmed that students throughout the school and sixth form receive careers advice and Mrs Clark has just reviewed the sixth form sessions that are run in PSICHE.

There are also employability skills sessions with tutors. Previously there were careers conferences but these are currently being held virtually. There is a higher education evening for university applications to discuss post 18 options.

It was raised that parents could support the careers information and provide talks. This is something we are looking into as well as building a LinkedIn page to connect with alumni who can help current students with careers advice.