

Our ref: Ss/sb

24 October 2013

Dear Parent/Carer

### **Upcoming Events for Sixth Form Students**

There are a number of events and opportunities for Sixth Form students and parents coming up, which I hope you will support and feel informed about after reading this letter. These include:

- Next Steps Day – Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> November, 10.00am – 3.00pm
- Year 12 Parents Evening – Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> November, 4.30pm – 7.00pm
- Year 12 visit to Plymouth University – Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> November, 7.45am – 5.30pm
- Parents' Information Session with Plymouth University and Student Finance England – Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> December, 6.00pm
- London Visit – Friday 6<sup>th</sup> December, depart at 5.30am

A Level study is challenging. There is a big step up from GCSE in terms of study throughout the year and also the level of difficulty of the final examinations. There needs to be a constant level of effort throughout the course, if students are to be successful at the end of it. This requires students to engage in approximately three hours per week of study in each subject outside of the classroom. This could be more for some subjects, particularly those with a practical element such as Drama, Photography, Art, Media, Product Design and Music.

I have spoken to all students about productive use of non-lesson time, which should be used for reading, research and completion of tasks set by their teachers. Students can study in the Library, Sixth Form Study Room, empty classrooms and the Common Room for collaborative study. There are also a number of other small study areas e.g. the Maths and Art areas.

Students should be using time at home for extra study. If they say they have nothing set by teachers or they have completed all tasks during non-lesson time, please challenge this and remind them that they should be engaged in further research, reading, practice papers and preparation for their personal next steps e.g. research into University courses, UCAS personal statements, apprenticeships and so on. There should always be something they can do. It is so important they develop a regular study habit outside of the classroom.

I am concerned that there are a number of students who are prioritising paid employment over academic study. Whilst I appreciate the attraction of earning money, this should not distract or impact upon their school work and should be fitted in around their study – if at all. An irregular sleep pattern is another factor which may be impacting on performance, particularly with those students who engage in night time TV and computer games.

There are lots of students who are working well, who are actively engaged and up-to-date with their studies. Your son/daughter may well be one of these and, if they are, then there is no need for further action other than to continue to support them in their studies. However, please be aware of any concerns and take the opportunity to discuss the contents of this letter with them.

### **Next Steps Day - Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> November, 10.00am – 3.00pm**

This event is designed to raise students' awareness and aspirations and give information about opportunities available when they leave the Sixth Form. We are building on the success of last year's event by having representatives from universities, local and national employers and employers offering apprenticeship opportunities. Some of these include: Exeter, Marjons, Falmouth Universities; police; armed forces; medical and veterinary sciences; teaching; engineering; catering; health and fitness; law; accountancy and retail. There will also be a number of presentations, e.g. Taking a Gap Year, Managing on a Student Budget and Taking a Year Out In Industry. Students will have the opportunity to meet and speak with universities and employers and research possible avenues for their future. Parents are very welcome to attend this event. I will send out further details a little closer to the date. There will also be details on the Academy website.

### **Year 12 Parents' Evening – Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> November, 4.30pm – 7.00pm**

This is our annual Parents' Evening; it will give you the opportunity to speak personally with teachers to get a more detailed up-date on your son's/daughter's progress and future prospects in their courses. You will shortly receive an appointment request form to select which teachers you wish to see and an interim report which will set out grades for subjects and attitude to learning scores.

### **Year 12 Visit to Plymouth University – Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> November**

A visit to Plymouth University for all Year 12 students will take place on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> November. This compulsory visit is part of the enrichment programme organised by the Academy. In the past the visit has proved to be extremely valuable in giving our students an insight into University life; for some students it will be the first time they have visited a University campus. It is interesting for all students, even if they are not considering University as their next step. A programme has been arranged with the University which includes:

- An introductory lecture on Higher Education
- A campus tour, led by University students – a chance to ask questions and get true answers from the people who are actually experiencing University life first hand
- A student workshop entitled 'My Perfect Course' followed by presentations by our students

The visit to Plymouth is free of charge. The expectation is that all students in Year 12 will attend as well as any students in Year 13 who may have missed last year's visit. We will be departing the Academy at 7.45am and travel by coach, returning approximately 5.30pm. Lunch will be provided by the University.

The timings for this day may mean some students will need to make special arrangements for getting to and from school; I have given enough notice for these students to do this. For students living in Braunton and Barnstaple there will be additional pick up points at the following times: 8.05am at the bus stop opposite The George in Braunton, 8.30am at Barnstaple Bus Station. Please let me know if your son/daughter requires picking up at one of these points so we do not waste time waiting at school for them.

**Parents' Information Session - Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> December, 6.00pm**

This session is in two parts and will be taken by Student Finance England and Helen Smith from Plymouth University. Helen will give advice and information about how to support your son/daughter in how to choose a University and course of study, and making their applications through the UCAS process. A representative from Student Finance England will explain the funding situation and give information about what is available in terms of grants, allowances, loans and bursaries for students applying for University.

**London Trip - Friday 6<sup>th</sup> December, depart 5.30am, return 12.00am**

This event was open to all Sixth Form students and those who wish to participate in this event have already received the information. There may be a few places remaining which will be decided on a first come, first served basis. This is always a great visit, particularly at this festive time of year when there are special carol services and performances in churches and Covent Garden. The Christmas lights are on, there are Christmas markets, ice skating at Somerset House and other festive events which the students can visit. Students also visit museums, art galleries and other famous London landmarks whilst independently navigating the area using public transport or by foot. This trip has been organised by students studying the Level 3 Travel and Tourism course.

There is a lot of information here which I hope you have had a chance to read. This information can also be found in the Sixth Form area on the Academy website. If you have any suggestions about improving our provision, or comments about what we already provide, I would be really happy to hear from you. Also, if you feel there is any way you could contribute to the work we do in the Sixth Form, for example on Next Steps Day, then please contact me.

Finally, please complete and return the enclosed form to enable us to plan and prepare for these events; it also provides a record of attendance. Thank you for your support.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "C Swailes". The signature is written in a cursive style and is followed by a long horizontal line that extends to the right.

**Mrs C Swailes**  
**Head of Sixth Form**



## Sixth Form Events – November/December 2013

Student's Name: ..... Tutor Group: .....

I have received the information letter dated 24<sup>th</sup> October 2013 and am aware of my son's/daughter's visit to Plymouth University on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> November.

I will be attending the following events (please tick as appropriate):

- Next Steps Day  
Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> November, 10.00am – 3.00pm
- Parents' Information Session with Plymouth University and Student Finance England  
Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> December, 6.00pm

Comments:

Parent/Carer Signature: ..... Date: .....