



WILLIAM FARR

C of E Comprehensive School

Our ref: RGN/TA

September 2025

Years 12 and 13 – The New Term

Dear Parent/Guardian

Welcome back to the new school year! I trust you all had a restful and rewarding summer holiday. To our new students and parents in Year 12 I would like to extend a warm welcome to William Farr Sixth Form, along with a “welcome back” to everyone associated with Year 13.

We are delighted to announce that our new sixth form study room, The Brittain Building, is now open. Students have access to a new kitchen, dedicated toilets and spaces for both work and socialising. This building demonstrates our commitment to the Sixth Form experience at William Farr.

As Head of Year 12 and 13, I consider it a great honour to work with such a talented group of students. Our entry requirements are challenging; consequently, all students should be proud of achieving the required grades to study here – each and every student is capable of achieving highly and progressing towards their chosen post 18 destination. I look forward to supporting all students in achieving to the best of their abilities and ensuring they can approach the next stages of their education with confidence, resilience, and pride.

Our high standards were exemplified by a wonderful set of A Level results this summer. 35% of all grades awarded were A* or A, with well over half of all grades A*-B. In addition to this 90% of students who applied through UCAS were offered places at their first or insurance choice institution with nearly half of these students accepting places at Russell Group Universities. Several students chose to take up exciting degree apprenticeship offers including a position at Rolls Royce. These trends are particularly pleasing when considering national trends.

As Year 13 students are already aware, the Sixth Form experience is different to life lower down the school. A-Level study differs significantly from that of GCSE. In each subject students receive 9 hours of teaching per subject over two weeks. They also have 2 lessons a week of supervised study and a PSHE lesson with their Form Tutor or an external speaker. The relationships that students build with their teachers are crucial; interactions are more collaborative and there is a greater focus on independence. To succeed it is essential for students to work outside of the classroom. As a rule of thumb, for every hour spent studying in lessons, an additional hour should be spent on homework or consolidating learning. We will also work with students to create a personalised timetable for their free time.

Consequently, it is vital that students balance the demands of A Level study with their commitments outside of school. As a school we actively encourage extracurricular and super curricular activities both in and outside of school; activities of this nature are excellent for student mental wellbeing and developing vital transferable skills. Sixth Form students have always played an essential role in our school community. In previous years, Sixth Form students have been actively involved in the wider school community as Heads of House, mentoring younger students and assisting at Open Evening to name but a few. Year 12 students will also have the opportunity to stand in elections to be members of the School Executive. It is an expectation that all students should participate in the wider leadership of the school in some way.

Additionally, whilst part time jobs can also help pupils develop a whole range of valuable transferable skills, it is important that students do not take on too much. As a school, we would recommend that students are employed for no more than 8 hours a week. Although I appreciate that students are keen to earn money, this should not be to the detriment of their studies. We also allow students to arrange driving lessons during their free periods. If a student wishes to take up this opportunity, it is vital I receive confirmation from home to approve the absence. This privilege is only extended to students who are making expected academic progress.

Expectations of students remain very high within the Sixth Form. Whilst we do not have a uniform, we do have a Sixth Form Dress Code which students are expected to adhere to. Students are required to wear suitable dress for a school. A copy of this code can be found on the Sixth Form section of the school website. If students in the Sixth Form are unsuitably dressed, as determined by the school, then we reserve the right to ask students to return home to change and/or to not wear said items again. I would ask parents and students to familiarise themselves with the dress code; following consultation with both staff and students some key amendments have been made for the new school year.

In the past year, we reviewed our mobile phone policy for Sixth Form students. Students are permitted to use their phones during their free periods in either study room. Phones should not be used at any other point without express permission from a member of staff. We made this change to recognise the demands of modern life on our students. However, whilst students are permitted to use their phones during free time please remind them that it is not essential!

Sixth Form students who own laptops often find it beneficial to bring their devices to school. We are happy for students to do this; however, this is entirely at the students own risk. All rules relating to ICT use on the school network apply to personal devices. This means that students should not access social media or messaging of any sort, take pictures, or play games. As I am sure you will agree, time in school needs to be used for study.

PSHE remains integral to the William Farr experience in Sixth Form. These lessons are essential in preparing students for life outside of school. In Sixth Form this term Year 12 will be focusing on the qualities required of Sixth Form students and the various post 18 pathways available to them. Year 13 students will also be focusing on their Post 18 pathways, with time dedicated to UCAS applications and research into all career options.

As I am sure you are aware, attendance is essential to success. As previously, holidays in term time will not be authorised. Additionally, Sixth Form students cannot self-certify absences. I would appreciate it if all requests for planned absence should be emailed directly to me. I think it is also important to note that historically, punctuality has been an issue for some Sixth Form students. Please could you support the school in reminding students of the importance of attending school on time; inevitably lateness is something that simply will not be tolerated in the world of work.

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to develop close links with both student's Form Tutors and myself. Should you have any concerns or questions at any point during the year, please do not hesitate to contact the school. If your query is subject specific, please contact the relevant Head of Faculty. As Head of Year, I will endeavour to respond to phone calls the day they are made. However, I do also have teaching commitments in addition to my role as Head of Year and this may not always be possible.

Finally, I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at my Head of Sixth Form Presentation on Wednesday 17 September. Details can be found in the letter emailed out to all parents and guardians last week. This session will closely follow the talk given last year and is more suitable for Year 12 students. We will also be holding a "Meet the Tutor" evening for parents of Year 12 students on Thursday 2 October. More details will follow shortly.

I look forward to establishing a productive and positive relationship with all of you.

Yours faithfully



Mr R Noon
Head of Year 12 and 13