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Head of College
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Dear parent/carers,

College standards updated

I hope you have a lovely half term holiday with your child after a very busy start to 2023/2024. We are really pleased with the way our year 12 students have settled into the college, rising to the challenge, and year 13 are now focusing on using every minute of their time in college as they move towards the final stretch. Looking ahead to the second half term, I wanted to contact you regarding our high expectations which we feel help ensure academic excellence from our students in addition to developing their character.

Mock exams begin:

We wish our year 13s the best of luck in their mock exams week commencing 20th November. All students have received revision lists for each subject, subject specific guidance on how best to revise, as well as being pointed towards valuable revision materials and websites.

Additionally, for those students studying Economics, Psychology, Maths, Physics, Chemistry and Biology, we have invested in the platform Uplearn. Many of our students have been taking full advantage of this website and appreciate the use of videos, quizzing, and exam questions to help them revise. By this point in the year, they need to be spending at least 2hrs per subject, per week to ensure maximum benefits.

Whilst students do need a break, it is important that they remember that by now they should be doing, at the very least, 16 hours of study per week and that due to the depth and breadth of A levels, it isn't possible to cram the week before. The majority of our students are doing this. Please do continue to encourage, support, and perhaps cajole as you have been doing, and if further support is needed, please do get in touch.

Please note that there is no study leave at this time and students are expected to be in lessons between exams as content is still being taught. Please be advised that students who do not sit the mocks at the same time as others due to illness will be expected to complete a slightly different exam to ensure that there is a level playing field for all.

The exam timetable is also attached to this email for your reference.

Year 12 in class assessments:

Year 12 will complete in class assessments on content studied so far from 13th November – 24th November. Students have been given revision lists and made aware of how they will be tested and when by their class teachers. Year 12 should be revising as they are going along, complementing home learning with additional personal study and should be working towards completing at least 15 hours a week of private study.

Punctuality:

When students and parents sign the scholarship agreement at the beginning of the year, they are agreeing to starting college each day at 8.25am so that they can join mentors for key messages, guidance and support. This ensures that they are ready to learn and able to take full advantage of all independent study periods and lessons.

This half term, some students have missed access arrangement testing, and other key information because they have not been present as these messages are conveyed by college mentors.

Punctuality is a soft skill highly regarded by employers. It is important our students get into good habits here in college as we prepare them for their next steps. We are thankful for your support in this matter. Of course, there are some exceptional circumstances: our elite athletes; those with unique transport arrangements; students with special consideration whereby they do not have to attend registration.

Attendance:

Research shows that **'If we extrapolate across a three A level programme, the typical student with attendance below 85% will perform at least two grades lower than a student with attendance above 95%. In competitive university entrance and other contexts, two grades represents a life-changing difference.'**

Source: *The Sixth Dimension Report 2019* published by SFCA

A levels and level 3 vocational courses are challenging and the breadth of content means that students can not afford to miss lessons. Whilst there are some exceptional circumstances, quality first teaching in lessons will always be preferable to catching up on teams or via online platforms. Additionally, it is key that all students are now using the quiet study space in the atrium to complete revision and home learning. Motivated by their desire to achieve, we hope to see attendance to independent study sessions increase over the coming months.

If your child has a planned absence, please be reminded that students must request a leave of absence form from the college secretary which needs signing by parents and then approved by the college team.

As many of you will be aware, Mel Sadler, our college secretary, will go on maternity leave shortly. Please ensure that you email contact@toothillcollege.co.uk and not Mel's email address for any queries, or to update us about attendance/illness.

At Toot Hill 6th Form College, we are committed not only to ensuring that our pupils achieve academic success, but our intention is to also develop their character in preparation for careers and post-18 destinations. Soft skills are looked upon favourably by employers, apprenticeship providers and universities. Therefore we are doing our students a disservice if we do not hold them to the highest standards.

Thank you for your continued support of the college and your child. We are incredibly proud of our students and want to ensure that our standards and expectations remain high as we know our students rise to them.

Yours faithfully

Catherine Mordue

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Head of College