



Bishop Wordsworth's School

Exeter Street, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP1 2ED

Telephone: 01722 333851

Fax: 01722 325899

E-mail: admin@bws.wilts.sch.uk

Website: www.bws-school.org.uk

Head Master: Dr S D Smallwood BSc (Hons) PhD NPQH

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Dear Parents/Guardians

Now that your sons have completed a month in the Sixth Form, I thought it would be a good time to get in touch. Year 12 seem to have settled very well into A level study and Sixth Form life, and I've had a lot of positive comments from my colleagues about their good start to the year, which has been very pleasing. The deadline for subject changes has now passed with only a few students adjusting their options choices, so I'm confident that our boys are embarked on the right courses for them.

One pleasing set of staff comments has been that Year 12 students are nearly all using their supervised study periods well and getting into their work – we've talked to them about planning their work schedule across the week and ensuring they check on Insight for assignments set, and clearly most of them are doing that well. We are also encouraging them to settle down to study in some of their unregistered free periods. The staff team of Mentors will be checking planners and working with those who are finding planning their workload difficult over the next couple of week. Now that notes and assignments are beginning to fill their files, you can help them by checking they are organising that paperwork well, perhaps by having a separate file for each subject and no loose sheets.

I have asked all the Year 12 teachers for comments on any early concerns with particular students, and have got in touch individually with a few parents where those have been raised, but mostly I've been pleased to receive positive feedback about the start each set has made. A written report in each subject will be sent out at the end of November, and you already know that Tuesday 11 December is the Year 12 Parents' Consultation Evening from 5.00 to 7.30 p.m. – I look forward to seeing you all there.

Those students doing the EPQ are getting their questions finalised so they can make a start on planning and research – do chat to your son about what he is choosing and encourage him to document every step, as that is an important part of the mark scheme. We'll be encouraging them to seek out appropriate resources, including arranging interviews with possible experts and requesting books via inter-library loan schemes. Later this month, we have a Southampton University academic visiting to work with our EPQ students on the key study skills they'll need.

There is a lot going on at school outside lessons, and I'm pleased to see Year 12 getting involved with rugby, football and other sports, as well as music, the school play, Young Engineers, debating, Politics Society, Medical Society, volunteering in the canteen, and much more. Do encourage your son to try different activities and broaden his perspectives – these are great ways to develop the kind of skills and character that universities and employers value. It is often through a society speaker meeting that students discover what they might want to apply for after BWS.

Finally some reminders – there have been a few bugs around, with boys off ill; we do like a call, email or message via Insight for each day of absence please, as well as a note in advance for medical appointments. We are building up to our Citizenship Conference on 26 October, which is an important event within the Sixth Form; it is a change to Teacher Training day for the rest of the school, but we expect all Year 12 to attend, in their suits and ties. The Conference starts at 9.00 a.m. at South Wilts with a speech from Claire Perry, MP for Devizes and senior government Minister. So boys will register at SWGS that morning, and then students will move into workshop sessions at both schools, which they will have selected in advance from the 16 put on by different organisations.

Do get in touch if you have questions or concerns.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Endersby', with a horizontal line underneath.

Alastair Endersby
Head of Sixth Form - Year 12