

KJu/parents april 2017

18 April 2017

Headteacher: Ms K Just

Dear Parent/Guardian

I hope you and your families had a good Easter break and that students are feeling refreshed and ready for this busy time of year. Most year groups will be undertaking examinations during the term and I include the dates of these below, along with the dates for the collection of results:

External Exams:

Years 10, 11, 12 and 13: Students have been issued with their own calendar of examinations. If a student has not received this, please ask them to see Mrs Wilkie who will provide them with a second copy.

Internal Exams:

Years 8 and 9: Week beginning May 8 2017

Year 10: During May/June depending on external exam dates

Results Dates:

Results for Year 12 and 13 will be available on Thursday August 17

Results for Year 10, 11 and Year 12 and 13 resits will be available on Thursday August 24

Please do help support students with their revision, and help them develop the independent skills they will need over the coming years.

Pastoral Change:

I am also writing to inform you of a change we will be making to the pastoral structure across the school. Samuel Ward Academy has for many years followed a vertical tutoring system, which has, in its time, been highly effective and supportive of student development. As a school, we now feel that, due to the many changes within the education and examination system, it would be more appropriate to follow a more traditional year-based system for tutor groups. This has been discussed with Senior Leaders, Governors and the Trust and all agree that this is a positive change for Samuel Ward Academy and in keeping with our 'schools within schools' philosophy.

The key reasons behind the change are that it will allow closer focus on each year group, so there is never 'dead time' during meeting time, as content will be targeted at each distinct year group and thus be more age appropriate. It will also allow us to develop the Year ethos and culture, with events targeted at specific year groups and, as tutors will follow their tutor group across the key stage, relationships will be maintained and strengthened, both with the student and with their parents or carers.

The best way to predict the future... is to create it.

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Our Meeting time structure will not alter and students will still be in groups of 14-16 for morning sessions. During this time tutors will have complete focus on the needs of one year group throughout the year. They will be able to tackle key issues with the whole group and discuss relevant issues, priorities and concern, for example, option choices, Sixth Form decisions, revision skills etc. It will also provide much greater focus on academic support for students within each year group, rather than there being times when the focus will be more on one group than another.

However, we do not want to lose the strong House ethos which has been developed over the years, so we will be ensuring that the house system is still strong by holding regular house assemblies, continuing with house ambassadors and leaders and having a head of house oversee events, competitions and house celebrations. This will also help maintain contact across year groups. We will also continue the peer mentoring support we offer across age groups to help support transitions and academic progress.

The structure will offer opportunities to re-launch our House competition between the houses in sport, performing arts, quizzes etc. Rewards and sanctions will be operated through year groups and through a house structure, offering more opportunities to celebrate success in a diverse range of areas. We believe this will offer the greater academic focus, whilst still engendering the positive values and strong community ethos we value so highly. If you have any comments or questions, please do not hesitate to contact me on kjust@samuelward.co.uk.

Thank you for your ongoing support of the school.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K Just', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kath Just
Headteacher