

North Oxfordshire Academy

Spring/Summer 2017

Sixth Form

Newsletter



Welcome to the second edition of The Sixth Form Newsletter. It has been a busy few months with sixth formers taking part in a range of events and activities, many of which are reported on in this edition.

It has been a busy time for staff, also, with the academy undergoing an Ofsted inspection in March which I am pleased to say resulted in the continuation of our Good grade. Inspectors met staff and students from the sixth form and across the school and observed a number of lessons; they were very complimentary about sixth formers and the sixth form in general and it was good to showcase some of the exciting things happening in the sixth form and the academy as a whole.

As we move into late spring, we approach the most important time of the year for our sixth form students; May, June and July will see year 12s and 13s taking AS, A level and vocational examinations across most subjects. All of the work which our students have done over the last academic year (or two years in the case of year 13s) will now be tested and assessed and the results will go a long way to determining what they do over the next few years.

Consequently, this can be a stressful time for students as the pressure of exams and revision builds. There is no easy way to avoid this – although studies show that this kind of short term stress can often improve performance – but we will be sharing with students some top tips on coping with exam stress over the next week or so.

Parents can also help with this, encouraging students to eat and sleep healthily in the exam run up and trying to avoid placing too much pressure on them during the exam period. Exams are important and many students have worked very hard to achieve the best grades they can this summer; however they are not a matter of life and death and sometime helping students to put exam performance into perspective can help to ease the pressure.

Having said all this, we feel sixth formers as a whole have had a very positive year and I feel sure that the next few months will validate all of the hard work they have put in since September. I hope you find the information in the newsletter of interest and wish everyone luck over the next term and half.



Adam Leyburn
Director of Sixth Form

Results day:

Staff will be available in the main hall to discuss options with students on the day and parents are welcome to join students in collecting A levels. If you are away and will not be able to collect results in person, do let the sixth form team know and we can either update you via email or phone.

Please follow the sixth form Twitter for updates and news:
[@NOASixthForm](#)

Head of Year 12	Jason Young
Head of Year 13	Beth Hall
UCAS Co-ordinator	Emma Brown
Lead Practitioner KS5	Abbie Neall
Attendance Officer	Lily Tiloca
Youth Work	Lee Davis
Welfare Officer	Emma Blane

For more updates and information on the sixth form provision please visit the school website at:

www.northoxfordshire-academy.org

The last four months have been exceptionally busy for our sixth formers...

Safe Drive Stay Alive

In November Y12 and Y13 were invited by Oxfordshire Police to attend a conference on safe driving. The day was informative and hard hitting with parents of victims speaking to students about the risks of the road. The day made way for those in the emergency services to advise students on the dangers that can occur when you are not paying attention whilst driving.

EPQ

In September, instead of PEP, sixth form students can gain some extra credit for university through their own extended project. Students work independently to create their own research.

Dominic Warner and Alicia Paget received A grades for their impressive work; Alicia who worked on conservation in Africa, was commended by the chief examiner who thought her project was 'original and showed unusual initiative and developed higher level skills.'

Annie The Musical

The drama department pulled out all the stops for their annual show, which this year was Annie. Students from all years were involved in the performance and performed for an audience over 2 nights at the end of term 4.

UCAS Applications Rise

This year, we have reached a record high with the amount of students applying for university through UCAS. With the support of tutors and UCAS co-ordinator, Emma, students all met the deadline to ensure they received offers in time. Alongside a record high in applications, we have a large number of students applying for Russell Group universities and some have received unconditional offers.

BASE

Y13 Economic students were invited to attend the ICAEW Base competition at St. Hughs' College, Oxford where they were assigned a mentor and had to come up with a business plan for a brief explaining issues that they had to solve. Students then had to prepare a strategy to undertake in the future and present their plans a panel of accountants. It was a fantastic opportunity to network and develop presentation skills and opened students eyes to new fields of employment.

NOA's Sambinos

Some of our sixth form students head down to the music department during Tuesday lunchtimes to release stress and get creative with the new band, Sambinos. The samba band is made up of lower school students alongside sixth formers and practise every week for performances at the end of term in

shows such as The Big Gig and at St Mary's Church. It is a great opportunity for students to build their confidence and socialise with students who look up to them around the academy.



Quiz Winners

It was a very close call with January's quiz. Y12 ladies came second to the winning Y13 boys Dom, Aaron, Nathan and Cameron who have won for the second year running!

Y13 Oxford Theatre Trip

Y12 and Y13 Drama students headed to the Burton and Taylor playhouse in Oxford to see 'All the Little Lights' which explores the cracks through society when two best friends lose sight of each other. Y12 students were expected to review the play for their AS course and comment on the production. Chloe Green said of the play "It was great! It was moving, funny and gritty. I really enjoyed it".

Head Boy and Head Girl Applications

Applications open during May for the Head Boy and Head Girl roles. As our Y13 Head Team come to the end of their responsibility as ambassadors for the school, we are looking to appoint new role models who will represent the school at events, lead on discussions with visitors and support teaching staff with duties around the school. Being part of the Head Team is attractive to potential employers and universities and as the UCAS application process draws even closer for Y12, it would be fantastic to include in a personal statement.

RAG week

This was the first year that the sixth form have held its own RAG week to raise money for a chosen cause. Mr. Young, head of Y12, ran the London Marathon and we thought this was a fantastic opportunity to raise money for Advantage Africa who he ran for. The 26 miles were completed in 4 hours and 14 minutes.

RAG week consisted of various events which were organised by the students and staff and helped to raise over £230.00 for the charity.

Music was put on a lunch time gig in the hall where students were asked to donate money in exchange for entertainment. A total of £60.00 was raised on that event alone. Following the music, the FA Elite team organised a staff and student 5 A Side football match, which also raised a hefty sum of £90.00. Car washing was another event organised by the sixth form team and Emma (study supervisor); a few helpers cleaned staff cars in the freezing cold. The week brought much excitement to raising and giving and was a brilliant way to end the term.

Total Raised by NOA: £230.00

Total Raised for the marathon by Mr. Young: £2,000.



Advantage Africa

Advantage Africa supports people affected by poverty, disability and HIV to improve their education, health and incomes. Their work helps some of East Africa's most vulnerable people to overcome prejudice, help themselves and build a better future for their families and communities.

Advantage Africa has projects in Kenya and Uganda. Below you can find out more about how we are making a practical difference on the ground.

<http://www.advantageafrica.org/projects>

Engineering Students build furniture.

Part of being part of NOA is being part of the community we live in. Mr. Murphy, who is head of Engineering, has worked over the last few months with Y12 students to create pieces of garden furniture out of recycled material for the local church. Alongside this, Emma and Mr. Murphy have supported Lee Davis down at St. Francis Church on Tuesday afternoons where with a groups of Year 7's they take part in gardening to help the local community.



Y13 Leaving Dinner

Every year Y13 and the sixth form team celebrate 2 years of success with a leaving dinner, after exams in June. The evening consists of awards, a quiz and music alongside speeches from staff who want to say goodbye to the year group. It is a lovely evening and this year it will be held at Banbury House Hotel on the 30th June. Those who wish to attend need to make a full payment by the 26th May.

Leaving Hoodies

Students leaving this year will be able to purchase leaving hoodies and are available to pay through Parent Pay. If you would like to make a payment for a student, please do login to your ParentPay account. Prices vary depending on what students wish to have stitched onto their jumpers but prices start at £21.00.

Drive IQ

To improve awareness of the dangers of driving, the sixth form students have access to Drive IQ which is an interactive program which is completed online through various modules. Set up by a local charity and endorsed by Michelin and the AA, it is a great tool to improve knowledge of the road and how driving impacts on people if done dangerously. It is a free service and Y13 students have completed modules during tutor time. If you wish to check it our yourself, please do visit: <http://www.driveiq.co.uk/students.html>

Apprenticeship Fair

The apprenticeship fair was a huge success on the 9th March with local businesses showcasing what they had on offer for potential employees.

Emma Farrow, an ex-student, was down at the fair to support Bretherton's Solicitors who offered her an apprenticeship 2 years ago and have since paid for her to complete a Law degree alongside gaining hands on experience.

Local primary schools were also in attendance to promote their teaching assistant roles to potential budding teachers. Over 30 companies were represented at the fair.



What are apprenticeships?

Apprenticeships combine practical training in a job with study. You get the opportunity to develop skills and work alongside experienced staff while qualifying for a particular role. You will also get paid and get the some of the same benefits as full time employees such as holiday pay and a weekly wage.

Where can students get more information on these opportunities?

Mrs. Thorne (our Business and Employability co-ordinator) is happy to book appointments with students to discuss what, 's on offer in the local area as companies often come to NOA looking for potential applicants.

There is also the government website which will provide you with a lot more information:

<https://www.gov.uk/apprenticeships-guide>

Apprenticeship Role for Y13 Alfie O'Sullivan



Y13 student Alfie has managed to secure an apprenticeship at Hanwell Fields Primary School where he will be a teaching assistant, specialising in teaching Sport to students. This is fantastic news for Alfie who has always shown initiative on the Youth Work course and through his academic studies. He will start part-time after Easter half term and will take up a full time position next year.

Good luck Alfie!

UCAS Applications

Most year 13s who have applied through UCAS now received all of their offers. Below is a guide for the next steps in the application process.

What do students do once they receive their offers?

After your application has been sent to UCAS, you track your offers through UCAS Track. This site will show you all of your offers and their conditions. The universities also email and write to you so please check regularly. As you receive your offers make plans to attend Applicant days, this is a good way of talking more to the people who will be teaching you and to the other students that will potentially be on your course. Research as much as possible, not only about the university and your course but also the city you will be living in. Find out how much travelling there will cost for example, do you like the accommodation? Perhaps take a parent for a second opinion. Find out as much as you can so that you can make a firm choice and an insurance choice. Remember you will all have different reply by dates so check yours so that you don't lose a place by replying too late.

What does 'unconditional offer' mean?

An Unconditional offer usually means that the student has already met academic entry requirements for the course. However there may be financial or medical conditions to meet. An unconditional offer is not necessarily the best for you. It may mean a guaranteed place at a university but you may not like the course or the location.

What are Russell Group universities?

There are 24 universities in this group and they are considered to be the best universities in the UK so entry requirements are generally high A*AA/AAAA. These universities carry out intensive and pioneering research which can then be passed on to students in lectures.

What if you don't get the grades for your choice?

If you don't get your grades for your first choice don't panic. Check your emails/track first as you may still have been offered a place from your first choice university. If that is a no go, remember your insurance choice perhaps they will accept you. If you meet their entry requirements then you are committed to going there. If you no longer want to go to your insurance choice you have to speak to the admissions team to negotiate yourself out of the contract you have made. The university does not have to agree to not taking you. They may agree to a change of course though. If you don't meet your insurance choice entry requirements you may go through Clearing. Clearing consists of universities that have courses with vacancies for you to search through. Perhaps look for a foundation degree/HND/HNC which generally have lower entry requirements and will still get you on to a degree at a later date.

Where do I go to get support for finance?

For financial support use <https://www.gov.uk/student-finance>, the university you are going to and the student loan website <http://www.slc.co.uk/>

What does 'clearing' mean?

If you have not got any offers or the exam grades to have been offered a place at university you can go through clearing. The clearing process runs from 5 July 2017 until 30 September. The process gives you the chance to search universities that have vacancies on courses.



Y12 University trip to Coventry.

Y12 students had a taste of what universities are out there when they attended an open day at Coventry University. Next term, students will start thinking about where they want to go in a year's time and will start the process of applying through UCAS which opens in October. Students need to start preparing evidence for their personal statement and submitting drafts to tutors for them to advise on.

Open Days happen throughout the academic year at universities across the country. We are happy to accommodate and authorise absences so they can be attended. Please see your tutor for details.

What offers have our students received?

The majority of our students have now received offers from universities and are delighted with what they have. Below are just a few of the places students have received offers from.

Congratulations to all of our students who received offers from UCAS.!



Josh Sole
Accounting and Finance at Birmingham

Dominic Warner
Mathematics at Warwick University



Callum Woodley
Mechanical Engineering at Wolverhampton

Megan Benham
English at Warwick University



Joshua Cheung
Aeronautical Engineering at Imperial, London.

Vincent McGibbon
Physical Education in the Secondary Years at Chichester University.



Nathan Moore
Discrete Mathematics at Warwick University.



Seik Jaiteh
Music Production and sound engineering at Point Blank, London.

Silver DofE

For the first time this year we are running the Duke of Edinburgh's Award in Sixth Form, offering students the chance to participate in the Silver Award. So what actually is DofE?

It's an international award with three levels, Bronze, Silver and Gold that can be started from the age of 14. It runs as an after-school club, and involves completing physical, skills based and volunteering activities, as well as several overnight camping expeditions. The DofE is all about going the extra mile – gaining new skills, pushing yourself physically, helping others and exploring new territories.



You achieve an award by completing a personal programme of activities in four sections:

- Volunteering: undertaking service to individuals or the community
- Physical: improving in an area of sport, dance or fitness activities
- Skills: developing practical and social skills and personal interests
- Expedition: planning, training for and completion of an adventurous journey in the UK or abroad

Our students are now in the process of practising their navigation skills and planning their expeditions. They have been volunteering in lessons and clubs, demonstrating their skills in drama and sports and committing to improving their physical health. For them it will be a great experience, and hopefully next year the same will be true for even more students. If you would like to find out more, please speak to Mr Young in the Sixth Form.

Y13 University Survival Trip

University applicants were able to attend a 'survival workshop' at Banbury and Bicester College which aimed to inform students of ways of getting through the next 3 years of education with interactive workshops and talks from universities and staff.

Workshops included:
- cooking on a budget
- home and letting
- motor vehicle
- drugs and alcohol
- fire safety

Students were able to find out more key information which will hopefully support them in their transition from sixth form to living away from home.

A Level Exams

AS and A2 examinations will start on the 15th May and all examinations will take place in strict exam conditions on site, invigilated by external examiners.

Students have been given their exam timetables and are required to make note of when and where their exams are. Any student late to an exam will be refused entry and will receive an automatic fail, so it is really important that students are prepared and take responsibility for their learning during the exam period.

Breakfast Club

We will be opening the sixth form 7am during the exam period to provide students with a space to revise before exams. Breakfast will be provided for students between 7am -8.15am. The sixth form team will be around to support and teachers have been invited if they would like to run morning sessions. Timetable of days cereal will be provided are up in sixth form.

16-19 Bursary

Students who are in full time education and who are aged between 16-19 are entitled to apply for the bursary fund to support their learning.

The bursary fund can be used to pay for course related resources such as books, clothing, trips, transport or courses. Those who are eligible need to ensure that they pick up an application form and complete all personal details plus add the resources they require to support their learning.

We understand that studying at KS5 level does include wider reading and compulsory trips which benefit students' experiences here at sixth form, but come at a cost. The Bursary is to support students and parents with these costs to ensure that all students can reach their full potential.

What do I need to do?

Students need to collect an application form (and guidance notes) from the sixth form office and complete information on the following:

- personal details
- resources they need with ISBN numbers (of books) and descriptions of what funding is required.
- cost and quantity

What if I have already bought resources but I am entitled to the bursary?

Students can claim this money back, providing they have receipts to support their application. If tickets for trains have been purchased please photocopy and attach.

How will the money be paid?

Payment will be made by BACS to students' accounts, if bought in advance. If resources have not been purchased, we can do this on your behalf.

How will I be assessed?

Students' behaviour and attendance is taken into account when applying for a bursary fund. Evidence of parents' income or tax credits/benefits will need to be provided to ensure you can receive the full amount. We prioritise those whose parents are on benefits or lower incomes but the vast majority of students receive payment.

I applied last year, do I need to apply again?

Yes, we get a bursary fund every year. Every year new resources are needed, so please apply.

I forgot I could apply - is it too late?

Applications re-open in October, January and June.

I need a sport kit for FA Elite. Is that covered?

Yes, that will be covered by the bursary if you complete the Bursary form.

More information on the bursary fund can be found online

through the school's website where you can download an application form, or through the government website below:

www.northoxfordshire-academy.org

<https://www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund/overview>.



Subject Focus: Media Studies



A Level Media interests many of students here at the Academy, mainly because of its split between coursework and examination, which gives students a variety in their learning and stretches them academically and creatively.

What is Media studies?

When most people think of Media studies, they assume that it consists of watching films all day and discussing how the female form is represented in them. However, they couldn't be more wrong. Media covers forms of analysis, critical evaluation, team work, budgeting, critical research and in depth planning. Alongside this, students are required to be active learners and are encouraged to read around the subject through reading news and magazine articles, news reports and political affairs.

There is much theory behind the media, and the academic side of the course looks at post-modernism, Marxist theory, narrative theory, genre theory and representation. Alongside these, students evaluate theoretical approaches and use them when analysing media texts, which take the form of print and broadcast. With a society that is becoming more reliant on technology and social media, it is a subject that questions decisions made by institutions and how these impact on the consumer. So, you could say that media has elements of other subjects such as Economics, English and Business.

The other element of the course is coursework, where students plan and develop their own piece aligned to a brief set by the exam board.

Some of the questions you will be able to answer...

- How is gender stereotyped in the media?
- How can we apply a Marxist approach to this text?
- How does an institution appeal to its audience through forms and conventions?
- Who or what is represented and is this an accurate portrayal?
- Who is the target audience?
- What element of Uses and Gratifications theory can we apply?
- What is censored in the media?

Some light reading...

Have a read of news websites and local newspapers. Being aware of the current affairs will help you apply context when answering exam questions.
<http://www.magculture.com>
<http://www.bbc.co.uk>

A little challenge...

Pick up two newspapers from the last 2 days and analyse the way in which the news is reported. Who are the institutions and what language do they use? How are these people or places represented?

AS and A2 Media is taught by Ms. Robinson and Ms. Hall.



Independent Learning

Being a student in sixth form means being an independent learner. A lot of students do not realise how big the jump is from GCSE to A Level and often forget how much reading around their subject that they need to do.

What does being an independent learner mean?

Being independent means working on your own initiative. Independent learners seek further information to support their own knowledge and understanding to ensure that they are confident in their topic area. Learners often work to their own devices and request support when they need it from teachers, but do not rely on instructions to complete tasks; they just do it!

What does an independent learner do in sixth form?

Learners can be seen scouring the library, online journals or exercise books to find answers to the questions they do not know. As well as learning about the content in their lessons, students read around their subjects through attending seminars, reading articles and engaging in discussions outside of the classroom to get different perspectives and views to aid their learning.

Why is it important to develop independent learners?

Students who wish to go on to higher education or move into a job role will find that they need to work on their own initiative. Employers and university tutors will be looking for people who can work independently and seek the information they need without having their hand held all the way. It is essential that sixth form students develop these skills so that they have a head start in their next steps.

How do we encourage learners to be independent?

We provide students with the core content in class, which is through classroom teaching, and direct them to other resources to help them answer exam questions, assessment papers and any queries that they have. Resources such as University of Oxford journals, academic online libraries and critical readings in the library are an example of where students should be going to 'read around their subject'.

What does independence look like in my subject area?

Every subject is different in its requirements and expectations on the course. In English Literature, for example, students need to be able to critically evaluate texts and apply their further reading to the contextual aspects of the text. This can sometimes be daunting for students, especially if they do not read around their subject or have a broad 'cultural capital'. Other subjects such as Business, Economics, Media and History, also require a lot of reading outside of the lesson. This could be to keep up with political and financial developments in current affairs (newspapers, news reports and articles) or to visit exhibitions in museums or libraries.

Attendance

Being independent also means being responsible for being on time to lessons and being in sixth form for all your lessons. There is a clear correlation between those students who attend all lessons and high grades in A Level results. Those who have poor attendance (below 95%) are often students who struggle to meet minimum requirements for courses and find catching up with content an issue.

Often, students can provide excuses as to why they have not attended a lesson which has been a recorded an 'unauthorised' absence, but essentially, they need to understand that failure to attend lessons will result in decreasing success in their subjects.

Therefore, being independent is also about taking responsibility for your own learning and making the commitment of being in sixth form 100% of the time. It also means addressing concerns around absence and poor application to learning and moving forward through resilience.



How can parents supporting with independent learning?

At the start of the year students receive book lists from their subject areas which subject leaders expect students to order books from to assist in their studies. We understand books can be expensive and we can support students through the 16-19 bursary, but books need to be ordered early on in the year to ensure that students are getting the most out of these tools.

What does independence look like beyond sixth form?

Using your own initiative within a job, degree or apprenticeship is essential and developing skills now within sixth form ensures that students already have a skill that makes them stand out during interviews. We provide a range of extra curricular activities in sixth form to develop independence such as volunteering, giving students autonomy on picking their work experience and organising their own events. It is key experience like these which make candidates attractive to potential employers or universities.

Assessment Centre Day

After the success of last year's assessment day, Mrs. Thorne has arranged another for students this July. Take a look at what some of the students said about their experience.



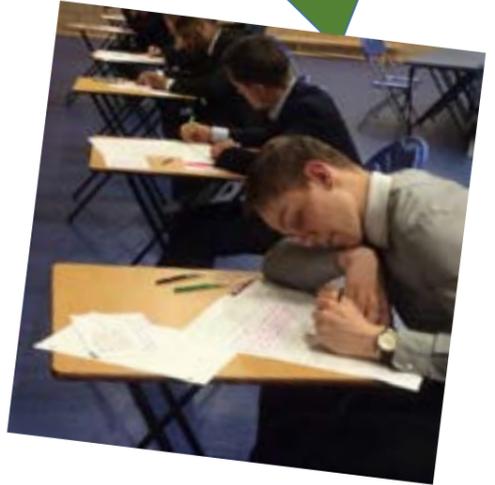
Assessment Centre
Simulation Day
11 July at NOA
8:50am to 3:20am



Nearly all big companies will send you to an Assessment Centre as part of the interview Process. Interested in having a practice? See Mrs Thorne to put your name down

The Assessment Centre helped me focus on which skills I needed to work on the most – as these skills are transferable it'll help me not only build skills for uni but post uni if I go.

I found that the Assessment Simulation Centre day gave me a taster of what a real interview could be. It threw you in the deep end and allowed you to understand your strengths and weaknesses



The Assessment Centre Day was good as we got to interact with external visitors who gave great feedback.

At the Assessment Centre day, I was able to have interview practise with someone I never met before, as well as try tasks that were new to me.



Tutor Programme

Every student in Sixth Form is allocated a tutor, whom they meet with once a day during tutor time to discuss any concerns or achievement that they have. Tutor time is also an opportunity for us to focus on areas which don't fit into their subject choices - such as finance, safety, UCAS, study skills and debates.

Tutors are experienced sixth form teachers who build relationships with students and parents over the two years of their time here. As well as using tutors to support and guide students, we also like tutors to act as mentors for those who perhaps need some extra support with behaviour or attendance. We value the relationships between parents and staff and see tutors as a bridge for parental engagement. Our sixth form team is essential to the running of programmes, interventions and tutor time and students receive the best support from these sessions. Tutors are also essential for collating the references for students in Y13.

Term 4

Life After Sixth Form

Y12 students will be focusing on the next steps after sixth form and looking at possible routes to university, apprenticeships and employment.

Documentary and Study

Y13 students will boost their cultural capital with documentaries on topics which raise discussion. They will also have an extra session of study a week to support their exam revision.

Term 5

Ethics

Y12 Students will be developing their debating skills and engaging in topics surrounding ethics.

Y13 students will not be expected to attend tutor after May half term.

Who are the tutors?



Mr. Judson (Head of Music)



Ms. Neall (KS5 Lead Practitioner)



Mr. Murphy (Head of Engineering)



Mr. Yeomans (Maths)



Mrs. Paris (Head of Drama)



Mrs. Robinson (Head of Media)



Mrs. Brown (UCAS co-ordinator)

Sixth Form Calendar 16/17

Month	Event
September	Apprenticeship Visitor (19th) Voting in the new Sixth Form Council (Y12 & Y13)
October	Drama trip (Y12+13) Oxford Playhouse (Wednesday 5th) Sixth Form Open Evening (Thursday 6th) Sixth Form weekend residential* UCAS Exhibition (4 October) Halloween Dress Up RAG (Monday 31st October)
November	Safe Drive Stay Alive Trip (Y12 & Y13)* Drama trip - Milton Keynes (Y12-13) Mocks (21-25th)
December	Christmas Show (Thursday 8th) Christmas Jumper Competition and Party (Wednesday 14th) Parents Evening/Morning (15th -16th)
January	Charity events*
February	Tutor Quiz University Challenge Final (6th February) RAG Week (6 - 10 February) Y12 Mocks (20th - 24th February)
March	Y13 Mocks (27th Feb - 3 March) Haddon Collider Event Drama theatre Trip (Oxford)
April	University Trip (5th April) Parents Evening/Morning Thursday (6th- 7th April)
May	Head Boy/Girl Applications Open (Term 5) 15th May - examinations start.
June	Head Boy/Girl take over Term 6 Y13 Leavers assembly (30th June) Y13 Leavers meal (30th June)
July	Summer Show (Thursday 5th July) Parents Evening (Thursday 13th July) End of year BBQ and celebration assembly (Y12)
August	17th - A Level results day.