

6 April 2011

To all Parents of Pupils in Year 13 – A Level Pupils only

Dear Parents

Further to Mr Dean's letter in October outlining key dates for the summer term I am writing to pass on important information in preparation for your son or daughter's final term at PGS. I enclose a guide for the final term which I would encourage all pupils to read carefully.

AS and A Level Timetable

The main period of AS and A Level examinations begins on Monday 17 May. Your son or daughter will have received their individual AS/A Level timetable from their tutor showing the dates and times of their examinations taking place this summer. A master copy will shortly be on display outside Miss Read's office and on the website.

I would be grateful if you could check the schedule carefully with your son or daughter and mark the dates in your own diaries, noting in particular whether an examination is scheduled to take place in the morning or afternoon. If you have any further queries relating to examinations please contact Miss Read. The Pupil Guide to Exams in the Sixth Form Information section of the School website may also help.

Pupils must wear school uniform for all examinations. Pupils are allowed to stay at home for the morning before an afternoon examination, if an examination takes place before official study leave begins.

Year 13 Leavers' Day: Friday 27 May

The 2011 Year Books and hooded sweatshirts will be available on Friday 27 May when there will be a Leavers' assembly followed by a barbeque lunch for Year 13 pupils and staff in the main quad. The Sixth Form team provides entertainment in the Sixth Form Centre for pupils after lunch; there are no formal lessons in the afternoon.

Year 13 Seminar Week: 6 – 10 June

Seminar Week will take place for Year 13 pupils during the week immediately after Half Term (Monday 6 – Friday 10 June inclusive). These seminars are an opportunity for pupils to receive revision information and discuss topics in their subjects. The seminars will be

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organised to take place during the time normally allocated for teaching in the timetable of the school day. Attendance at Seminar Week is to be encouraged but is not compulsory. In addition to this, pupils are welcome to contact their teachers by e-mail (all staff e-mail addresses are available on the School website) if they have any queries or if they would like to book an additional session. A seminar timetable will be available before the half term break and will also be on the website.

Year 13 Study Leave: commences Monday 13 June

Study leave for Year 13 pupils begins at 8.45 a.m. on Monday 13 June. From that date, pupils are not required to be in school outside examination times.

For any pupil who has examinations *before* this date, normal study leave rules apply which means that pupils may have the morning before an afternoon examination off school for revision. The remainder of the teaching time available before half term is crucial for pupils to consolidate their A2 courses and to prepare for the final examinations.

Code of Conduct During Examinations

It may be helpful to reiterate the following points:

- The Library will be open from 8.30 am throughout the A Level exam period.
- Candidates should gather ten minutes before an examination is due to start and wait outside G block until called to go into the hall. They should be smartly dressed and silent on entering the examination.
- Mobile phones must be switched off and handed in at the start of the session. Failure to do so could result in disqualification from all examinations.
- Pencil cases should be transparent.
- Calculator lids should be left outside the hall.
- Candidates are not allowed to leave the hall before the official finishing time of the exam

Special Circumstances

In case of illness on the day of an examination, candidates should see Miss Read, The Head of Examinations. It is advisable for candidates to attempt to sit the examination, if possible, in order to provide evidence of their performance on the day. It is usual for a candidate to have to complete at least 50% of a written module before a mark will be awarded in recognition of mitigating circumstances.

Miss Read will be able to assist in communicating with the Board if this situation arises, although medical support for any illness or complaint will be required.

Book Return Day

Pupils are asked to return all books on Monday 27 June between 10.45 and 11.30 am. School uniform does not need to be worn on this occasion. Any pupils who will have examinations beyond this date may return texts after their last examination.

A Level Results Day

A Level results will be sent to the school and to universities on Wednesday 17 August. The results are embargoed until Thursday 18 August when the school is open for pupils to collect results. Year 13 may collect their results from 8:00 am onwards. All Year 13 pupils are encouraged to come in to school to collect their results, although they will be posted home if they are not collected.

Pupils have the opportunity to log on to their UCAS accounts early on Thursday 18 August. This will enable them to see if their application has been updated, showing if they have been accepted on to their chosen course even if they have not received their results. Pupils who have not had their UCAS accounts updated should not be unduly concerned.

On receiving their results and meeting their offers pupils should find that their UCAS account will be updated to confirm that their Conditional Firm (CF) university has accepted them on to their chosen course. If a pupil unfortunately misses their first choice offer but secures the necessary grades to meet their insurance offer they will be released from their first choice and accepted by their insurance choice, all of which will be shown on their UCAS account. Pupils who are offered their insurance choice are encouraged to accept these. It is our experience that in most cases their insurance offers will be a stronger choice than a similar course at a university that they may pick up through clearing. At this stage there may well be some phone calls to make with regard to university accommodation.

It is certainly our expectation that pupils this year should be confident about their university places but, given recent reports of fewer places and more applicants, it is worth noting our strong advice to look carefully at their insurance choices and to visit if they have not done so already. This year, perhaps more than previous years, nationally we are likely to see fewer places but with increased demand. Ensuring computer access during the week after results is also encouraged.

UCAS Extra is now available online and this allows pupils who are holding no offers, either

because they have been rejected from their chosen universities or have declined offers, to reapply where there are spaces on courses. This is occasionally used by pupils at PGS.

Two years ago UCAS started a scheme to help pupils 'trade up', called the Adjustment period. If a pupil should gain results that exceed the offer of their Conditional Firm choice they can apply through the Adjustment Period. For example, if a pupil secures ABB instead of the BBB that their Conditional Firm university has offered they may wish to see if they can 'trade up' their chosen course at another university. The Adjustment period will be available from results day for a two week period and it will allow pupils to make contact and apply to universities one at a time. Relatively few pupils are likely to need this service; it was used by only a few hundred candidates countrywide last year.

Heads of House, Heads of Department and the Sixth Form Team are available on results day to offer any advice or support. The Careers Department will also be open, providing telephones, computers and access to university information. As a result, it is best if pupils collect their results in person. The period immediately after A Level results is a crucial time for pupils to confirm their university place or discuss their options and we encourage all pupils to be in School on this morning.

Student Finance

Those applying for student loans should note that the deadline for application is 31 May to ensure that finance is in place by the start of term. . A Guide to Financial Support from Student Finance England is enclosed with this mailing. However, if a pupil has applied for deferred entry then application does not need to be made this year.

Good Luck

If you have any queries or concerns in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me (n.gallop@pgs.org.uk or tel: 023 92 681362) and if you should have any specific questions relating to exams please contact Miss Read (j.read@pgs.org.uk or tel: 023 92 681363). There are some useful tips for candidates in the Final Term guide which I recommend reading through. Good luck to all the pupils who are sitting exams and also to parents who are supporting the examined. I look forward to seeing you all at the Leavers' Service and Lunch on Saturday 25 June.

Yours sincerely

N D Gallop
Assistant Head (Head of Sixth Form)