

22nd March 2019

Dear Parents and Carers

Re: The negative effect of Unconditional offers

As you will be aware Year 11 pupils need to remain in Full time Education, Employment which includes training or Full Time Training until they are 18. For many of our pupils it will involve remaining in our sixth form but we are aware that some pupils are considering other options.

Recently I have been made ware of something that should be a significant concern to Year 11 parents and which I believe is highly irresponsible. Some Year 11 pupils are reporting that they have been made “unconditional offers” of places by other sixth form providers. This means that the pupil will be offered a place in that institution regardless of the actual grades a pupil achieves in their GCSE examinations. This is something that has been a growing trend for universities to do as they desperately compete to increase numbers and secure the funding that this brings and has been recognised as negatively affecting the performance of many pupils.

This can appear very appealing to pupils as it might be seen to remove the stress of needing to secure particular grades to gain a place on the post-16 courses of the pupil’s choice. However, our concern is that some pupils will lose focus on the importance of their studies and will mean that their final grades at the end of the course will be lower than would have been the case had the pupil applied themselves fully for the remainder of their courses.

Whilst this does not affect their place at the post-16 institution, it does mean that the difference in GCSE grades, which universities and employers ask for, can be used to decide who gets an interview where other post-16 qualifications are identical.

I thought it would be useful at this crucial time for you to understand that this is one of the reasons why we are so determined that your child applies themselves fully to their studies for the remainder of their courses. Should your child receive an unconditional offer from another institution, it is in their best interests not to see an unconditional offer as a reason to not push themselves to get the best possible final GCSE grades.

Thank you for your ongoing support for your child’s education.

Yours faithfully



Mr A Boyle
Headteacher



Mr T Quinn
Executive Headteacher