



THE BUCKINGHAM SCHOOL

A SPECIALIST SPORTS COLLEGE

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Headteacher: Mr A McGinnes

04 April 2019

Dear Parents / Carers,

I am writing to you following our Year 11 Sixth Form Entry Interview Evening, which was held yesterday evening.

I thank all the students that attended and commend you for the high level of professionalism, social skills and good manners that you demonstrated, my staff thoroughly enjoyed spending time with you in discussing your course choices and future options.

I would also like to take the opportunity to explore and clarify with you previous communications. This is the first time, certainly in a good while, that the school has taken the initiative to ask the students what courses they would like to see offered. The benefits are obvious, but it has made the process a little more complicated. We took great care to publish two booklets, one of our current courses, and one called "Under Construction". As a school, we always recognised that not all these courses would run, as not enough students would select them. We offer our sincere apologies if this was not fully understood by the whole community. The rationale is that if classes are too small, not only is this economically unviable, but also does not present a good teaching climate for that subject.

The government funding for Sixth Form is, frankly, appalling. Only a couple of days ago, over 1000 councillors wrote to the government asking for "billions" in extra funding. The "little extras" recently announced by the government will be spent on routine maintenance by The Buckingham School. Of all of the areas of cuts in school funding, Sixth Form has been the most severe, with the amount frozen since 2013. We receive even less funding per pupil at Sixth Form level than we do for Key Stage 4 (GCSE/Level 2 BTEC) and yet run smaller classes. The community of this school; Governors, Staff, Parents and Students are all deeply committed to us having a Sixth Form, but financial realities mean that it will always run at a cost that exceeds the funding. Research shows that Sixth Form classes should be at around 12 students, in a cohort of around 100 to be self-funding; we set our minimum class size at 8, and the cohort tends to be around 60-70. For these financial and educational reasons, we have to draw a line somewhere: 8 is our bottom line.

Therefore, if final student numbers in a particular subject fall below 8, we reserve the right to make the difficult decision to withdraw that subject. The idea is that, because of our consultative approach to the offering, this is much less likely to happen than in the past.

The benefits of a small and intimate Sixth Form are clear in the success of our students. However, particularly in the current educational climate, we cannot have our cake and eat it!

Please do contact us if there is anything further that you would like to discuss in regards to Sixth Form entry and the courses that we are running.

With best wishes

Mr A McGinnes
Headteacher

Mrs S Pykett
Assistant Headteacher &
Director of Sixth Form

The Buckingham School is concerned that every student should have the opportunity to attend school activities/obtain equipment, regardless of their financial circumstances. As such, it may be possible to subsidise those students who would otherwise be unable to attend trips/purchase items. Please feel free to write in confidence to Mrs S Gallagher or Mrs K Bones at office@buckinghamschool.org, if you wish to seek assistance, or obtain more information about Pupil Premium funding.

