Sixth Form Council Minutes – 21st September 2023 - Curriculum-related sections only

Sixth Form Council Minutes - Date: Thursday 21st September 2023

Attendance

- Dr Palmer
- Mrs Conolly
- Mr Selby
- Mrs Hiettt
- Emily Yarham (Chair)
- Rebecca Boyejo (Secretary)
- Plus 9 Student Representatives

Teaching and Learning

1. Homework

It was discussed that Year 13s were struggling somewhat with the homework being set during the UCAS early applicant phase. It was asked if work could be decreased as Year 13s believed they had reduced study periods but more homework than in Year 12.

- It was established that the number of study periods that Year 13 have is not massively different this year and that the situation alluded to does not impact many people. It was mentioned that ideally, Year 13s who were early entrants should have finished their personal statements during the summer holidays although accepted that many students had many demands on their time.
- It was also mentioned that a decrease is homework could have later repercussions e.g., not being able to finish the course on time or not being able to reinforce content as homework is meant to do. Instead, it was concluded that students should communicate with teachers, asking for reasonable extensions before the deadline when necessary.

2. Overnight homework

It was brought up that in Psychology students were set a 2-hour sheet to complete overnight and also the Psychology homework load is quite a lot every lesson. This point was noted.

3. Year 13s having private study in form time

Some students requested the option to study privately instead of taking part in form time activities. However it was explained that form time activities had a clear purpose and that the focused use of this time was extremely important. On occasion, for

example when a tutor is seeing individuals, reading would be an appropriate activity at the tutor's discretion. Mrs Hiett and Mrs Connolly further noted that if form times were dedicated to private study the next requests would be for form time or assembly to be optional and therefore high expectations would be maintained.

4. Power Points (Retrieval practice)

PowerPoints were reported to be being well used, especially the consolidation tasks that are featured at the start of the lesson. Students mentioned that they found this retrieval practice helpful, especially in Psychology and in Mr Rowell's lessons. It was also indicated that they would like to see this retrieval practice in other lessons particularly in the Humanities subjects.
In Politics the drop downs including future lessons, PowerPoints and Worksheets for each module on Teams was praised. Students found it useful to see upcoming topics and homework and to see where they are in the course. It was especially praised as useful when needing to catch up on missed lessons. We concluded that this feature is worth looking at to implement into other subjects' Teams.

5. PowerPoints (Putting them on before the lesson)

Students inquired if they could have PowerPoints made available before lessons. However, staff suggested that this might lead to a decreased engagement and was also not necessarily a good teaching technique. Therefore it wouldn't be appropriate to make a blanket expectation on this. However (as per many previous discussions) students should have paper or electronic resources in or after lessons depending on the use made of the PowerPoint by the teacher.

6. Revision /support sessions.

Some students had requested a return of revision sessions and subject support sessions. Staff noted that these sessions will be back but at this time of year support for UCAS, for interview prep and for students new into Y12 were a larger priority. As examinations approach the focus of effort will necessarily change.

AOB

1. Careers Talks

Students expressed an interest for more career talks on more career choices and talk from academics. Some topics mentioned in the meeting were finance, property developing and managing a business. A great effort is being made to increase the number of academic lectures; Dr Palmer is working with staff on this. Dr Hiner is also looking to increase the number of Careers Talks; it was requested that representatives inquire with students in form times what jobs they would like to see addressed in the career talks, particularly in sector beyond law, medicine and business.

2. The Cube for Year 13s only

Year 13s inquired whether the cube in the John Moore Library can be used for only Year 13s as sometimes Year 12s are not using the space as a study space. Staff were not keen on such a division, reminding all that the Cube is a space to which all should have access but any misuse of the space should be reported to Mrs Howell.

3. Supervised study

Year 13s wondered if supervised studies will make an appearance on their timetables this year. Staff confirmed that this would happen soon as these lessons are a good opportunity for productive work.

4. PE Timetable

Year 13s remarked that many were a bit confused regarding the timetabling of PE lessons. Owing to some students' timetables they may have PE period 4 and then a lesson period 5. Staff encouraged all to check this by refreshing their SIMS app and if there are any further confusions they should talk to Mrs Connolly.