



16 March 2018

Dear Parents/Carers

## Headmaster's Newsletter 11 – Year 12 Admissions Criteria 2019 - 2020

Following a meeting of the full Governing Body on Wednesday 7 March, it was agreed that the new Year 12 Admissions criteria for 2019 - 2020 will use a total grade points score of at least 63 from the best nine GCSE subjects. Points will be allocated as the number of the grade. Grades at 4 or lower will not be counted. For unreformed subjects A\*=8, A=7, B=6. A move to 63 points would allow a student with 9 Grade 7s to meet the entrance criteria for Year 12. This would be the equivalent of 9 Grade As under the previous grading system. Students would still be able to make up these points from 8 x 8 or 7 x 9 or a combination of their best 9 subjects. A copy of the Admissions Policy for 2019 – 2020 is attached.

Please note that the Admissions Consultation was based on a student achieving **64** points to enter the Sixth Form. The School received 100 responses with over 40% of the responses coming from Year 11 parents. All responses were read by both myself and the Chairman of Governors, and discussed at length by the Admissions Committee and by the Full Governing Body. The main thread of the responses was that the **64** points in this Admissions Policy was too high, and Grades 9s and 5s should be counted. I would like to confirm that despite this Admissions Policy being for 2019 -2020, this Policy will also apply to our current Year 11. Year 11 students will require 63 points to gain entry into the Sixth Form in August 2018 rather than 64 points.

Another point made in the consultation was around what the new GCSE grading system will look like. Whilst there is some uncertainty as to whether the new grading system will penalise our students, likewise the new grading system might mean our students perform better than expected i.e. more students with Grades 8 and 9. A substantial decrease in the points score may mean that we have to revisit this again next year if we set the bar too low. The word 'usual' in our Admissions Policy allows us to overcome any fluctuations in the grading system, especially if students miss out on the entrance criteria by a small number of points.

It has become easier for students to meet the criteria as we are now expecting students to achieve 63 points from a maximum of 81 points rather than 64 points from a maximum of 72 points. We are using Grade 9 and Grade 5, which was not included under the previous points score.

We appreciate that students might have difficulties in one subject and that is why the score is made up of 9 GCSEs rather than the 10 GCSEs, which all students begin studying in Year 9. I am sure all parents will agree with the expectation that students work hard in all of their subjects. Our students are bright enough not to have to specialise in a small number of subjects, such as 4 or 5. However, students can still, to some extent, focus on fewer subjects as 63 points can now come from only 7 subjects (7 x 9) if they feel they will get the top grades in these subjects. We will also look favourably at students dropping subjects if parents and students feel that this is in their best interest, although this should be done with caution as it may impact on them being able to gain 63 points.

However, the overwhelming feeling by the Governing Body is that our Policy should be implemented fairly, transparently and, more importantly, in a way which will allow any student entering Year 12 to flourish both pastorally and academically. This is why the word 'usual' has remained in the Admissions Policy, and will be applied when necessary. All parents should realise that this Policy will no longer be



Goddington Lane  
Orpington  
Kent BR6 9SH

Tel: 01689 820101

used to prevent students entering the Sixth Form where there is a sound and robust educational reason for them to stay. There will be students who miss the entrance criteria by a long way and therefore they will be entering a Sixth Form where they will be well below the pace and ability of all other students. For them, the Sixth Form at St. Olave's is unlikely to be a place where they will thrive in their studies. However, for a student who has just missed the criteria and has achieved the grades in the subjects he wants to study in Year 12, then there needs to be a clear dialogue with the parents and students about whether this is the right place for him based on educational principles, e.g. someone who achieves Grades 9s in the Sciences and Maths but does not do very well elsewhere could well be suited to doing a science based curriculum here in the Sixth Form. However, if he wanted to do Humanities, maybe this would not be the place for him to be as his starting point would be well below others in the class.

I hope this reassures parents that the consultation has been taken very seriously. The Admissions Policy for 2019 - 2020 has been discussed at length by Governors who, together with the Senior Leadership Team, are totally committed to the intellectual and pastoral growth of each student and we believe strongly that the new Policy will ensure that this goal is met. We will be monitoring its impact closely and welcome feedback from parents.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Rees', with a small flourish at the end.

Andrew Rees  
Acting Headmaster