



Dear Year 11 students and parents

Re: Applications to join St John's Sixth Form for the 2018/19 Academic Year

Firstly, I am absolutely delighted to report that the recently published Government schools' 'League Tables' information indicate that, in 2017, students completing their studies in our Sixth Form achieved "above average" progress. Not only that, our 'A level performance' progress score of +0.17 is the highest for any state school located in the borough of Gravesham and ranks in the 'Top 5' of state schools (including Grammar Schools) across the whole of Kent.

Source: <https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/schools-by-type?step=default&table=schools®ion=886&geographic=la&phase=16to18&for=16to18&datasetFilter=final>

I am sure that as fellow members of our school community, you will share in my delight at these fantastic results and join me in congratulating the students who achieved them and of course the teaching and other members of our school staff who supported them during their two years in our Sixth Form. Many of our students have capitalised on their personal success to secure places at coveted 'Russell Group' and other universities or to apprenticeship opportunities with a host of major 'blue chip' organisations.

As you will perhaps not be surprised to hear, the success of our Sixth Form has generated a lot of interest from young people who are currently attending other schools elsewhere in Gravesham and beyond. Subsequently, with a maximum Year 12 cohort of 150 students for the academic year 2018/19, the Sixth Form is 'over-subscribed' in terms of the number of applications received. As I write this to you, we have currently received 264 applications, with a further 29 of our own students still to apply.

Therefore, from a student perspective, if you believe that St John's will be the best place for you to complete your Sixth Form studies, it is recommended that you **indicate this by making St John's your first choice on the UCAS/Kent Choices system** in order to strengthen your application. It is very much our intention to offer a place to every internal student who indicates St John's as their preferred school, as long as they meet the necessary entry requirements in this summer's public examinations.

Conditional offers of a place at our school from September 2018 will be made via the UCAS/Kent Choices system during March 2018.

Choosing where to complete Sixth Form studies is both an important as well as a difficult decision. For any student, to maximize their potential in Sixth Form, it is essential that they are happy with the choice that they make. Naturally, I sincerely hope that all eligible students will choose to come to St John's; that said, I also recognize that, for a variety of reasons, we might not be the school that is the 'first choice' for a given student and their requirements for Sixth Form study.

However, in view of Year 12 being 'over-subscribed' for places for the academic year 2018/19, students who are currently in Year 11 at St John's who indicate another place of study as their first choice on the UCAS/Kent Choices system, must do so with the understanding that should they not be offered a place by their first choice place of study, there is no 'guarantee' of them being offered a place at St John's.

Therefore, I would strongly urge students to carefully think about who they list as their first choice on their UCAS/Kent Choices applications. If a student's first choice is not St John's, I would further urge them to carefully consider if meeting an alternative Sixth Form provider's entry criteria is a realistic prospect. Assuming that it is, perhaps more importantly, I would recommend that students and their parents do as much research as they can to ensure that the alternative provider is the right place for that particular student to achieve their very best.

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For example, attending a school's Sixth Form Open Evening and an interview may not provide an accurate view of what life is really like at a school, so I would suggest that students and parents ask if they can visit the school during normal school hours. In previous years, students who had initially chosen to attend alternative schools for Sixth Form but were unable to settle, were given the opportunity to re-join St John's. Again, given the current situation in terms of over-subscription, I cannot guarantee that this will be an option moving forward.

This situation of being over-subscribed for Sixth Form is a new one for the school to find itself in but it is a direct reflection of the excellent progress that we are making as a school both in Years 7-11 but also with regards to our Sixth Form provision. Subsequently, I very much hope that current Year 11 students and their parents will recognise this progress and the students will choose to continue their education here at St John's. Nonetheless, I fully respect any student who chooses to pursue their education elsewhere and naturally wish them the very best of success. However, with these best wishes, I hope that students and parents will similarly respect the school's intention to prioritise applications from students who indicate St John's as their preferred school.

If you have any questions about the content of this letter, then please contact Mrs Ainscow, Head of Sixth Form or Mr Murray, Deputy Head of Sixth Form at the school.

Yours faithfully

Mr Barron
Headteacher