

Our Ref: BSN/KON

15 April 2015

ALL YEAR 11 PARENTS/CARERS

Dear Parents/Carers

Re: GCSE Strategy

As I am sure you are aware we are rapidly approaching exam season. This is a very important time in the life of every Year 11 pupil and the school as a whole. I am therefore writing to set out some of the most important dates over the coming months, what the school will do to ensure that every pupil achieves as well as they can, what you should expect to see from your child and how you can help.

Key dates include:

- ✓ Beginning of Exam Board timetabled exams - Monday 11 May 2015;
- ✓ English Language Exam - Tuesday 2 June 2015 at 9am;
- ✓ Maths Exams (Non Calculator) - Thursday 4 June 2015 at 9am;
- ✓ Maths Exam (Calculator - Monday 8 June 2015 at 9am
- ✓ Year 11 Leaving Day - Friday 5 June 2015;
- ✓ Final Day of Exams - Friday 19 June 2015.

*- Please note that a full list of the exams is available on the school's website and a personal copy has already been given to every pupil.

We have decided to do things very differently to, what has been, the traditional method of preparing pupils for their exams this year. We are determined that pupils will be given the very best opportunity in the Summer 2015.

Some of the changes include:

- ✓ providing every pupil with a GCSE Strategy Pack for every subject. Each pack contains past exam papers, mark schemes and a comprehensive set of resources to aid revision. The packs are the basis of Year 11 lessons from now until the exams;
- ✓ the introduction of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) which has lots of resources for pupils to use;
- ✓ a large range of after school revision sessions (information available on the school's website);
- ✓ a later leaving date (Friday 5 June 2015) so that pupils can benefit from more revision and exam practice in their lessons;
- ✓ a comprehensive programme of Revision Sessions immediately before exams;
- ✓ a "How to Revise Session".

All the measures have required a considerable amount of the school's resources but they are already having a significant impact in terms of the effort and motivation of the pupils. I am confident that in

school we are doing things much better than was previously the case but we need the buy in of pupils and parents if we are to help pupils achieve their full potential.

Parents often want to know what their son or daughter should be doing at home. This is not an easy question to answer because every pupil is an individual. However, there are a number of constants at this stage. I would expect every pupil to be revising at home. I would suggest that they should be doing at least 90 minutes per night and 3 hours at the weekend. Pupils need to have devised a Revision Timetable so that they make the most of their time (Tutors will be happy to help with this). I would expect pupils to have their Exam Timetable displayed somewhere prominent at home (the fridge is often a favourite). The GCSE Strategy Packs and VLE are very useful tools to help with revision.

The other question that parents want to know is how they can help. The first thing is that they must ensure that their child's attendance is 100% until 5 June 2015. With less than 40 school days left pupils need to be in school. Secondly, parents should take an interest in how everything is going and what their child's plan for revision is. Thirdly, they need to provide a quiet and calm environment for revision. Finally, balance is very important so encourage your son or daughter to take a break occasionally to clear their minds.

A very wise colleague once told me that everything that a child has done since they were in their pushchair looking at a book or having bedtime stories read to them is a lead up to this point. I think this is absolutely true and helps to explain how important the next few weeks are. I am certain that if we work together our young people will be delighted on 20 August 2015 and we will be very proud of them.

Please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher with any concerns or queries.

Good luck to them and to you.

Yours sincerely

Mr Stitchman
Head Teacher