

Our Ref: BSN/KON

March 2016

ALL YEAR 11 PARENTS

Dear Parents/Carers

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 16 May 2016;
- English Literature Exam (Prose) - Monday 23 May 2016 at 9.00am;
- English Literature Exam (Poetry) - Friday 27 May 2016 at 9.00am;
- English Language Exam - Tuesday 7 June 2016 at 9.00am;
- Maths Exam (Non- Calculator) - Thursday 26 May 2016 at 9.00am;
- Maths Exam (Calculator) - Thursday 9 June 2016 at 9.00am;
- Year 11 Leaving Day - Thursday 16 June 2016;
- Final Day of Exams - Friday 24 June 2016.

*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 are determined that pupils will be given the very best opportunity in Summer 2016. It is for this reason that we have consolidated and improved our successful GCSE Strategy from last year.

Some of the changes include:

- providing every pupil with a GCSE Strategy 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 (Thursday 16 June 2016) so that pupils can benefit from more revision and exam practice in their lessons;
- a comprehensive programme of Revision Sessions immediately before exams;

- “How to Revise” Sessions delivered in Tutor Time;
- a series of support evening for parents and carers.

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 we are doing things much better in school than was previously the case. In addition we need the buy in of pupils and parents if we are to help the pupils do their best.

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 such as, 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 day during the Easter Holidays (with one day off for good behaviour!). Once pupils return to school they should be doing 90 minutes per night and at least 3 hours over the course of each 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 ask is how they can help. Firstly they must ensure that their child’s attendance is 100% until 16 June 2016. 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 parents must encourage their 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 with their results on 20 August 2016 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 B Stitchman
Head Teacher