

Dear Parents, Guardians, Carers

IT'S REVISION TIME!

We are currently in the middle of the process of holding “mock examinations” and on Thursday 9th February we will have the Year Group's results morning. It is now also time to start thinking seriously about preparing for the revision needed for the “real” exams in May and June. All of the evidence suggests that the most effective revision is that which starts early and is regular, “chunked” activity. This not only “programmes” our brains in a long term way, it also relieves stress by placing the student firmly in control of their own learning.

As usual, our aim is to support the students as fully as we can to allow them to meet their potential. This letter will explain some of the ways we plan to do this:

Revision Evening

On Thursday 23rd February 2012 we will be holding a Revision Evening aimed at both students and parents. The evening, which will be from 6.30 – 8.00pm, will include a brief presentation in the Hall, followed by a series of workshops on issues such as:

- The use of mind maps
- Technology based revision
- Dealing with stress
- Active revision strategies
- How to revise in English/Maths/Science

In our experience, the biggest stumbling block to revision is not knowing HOW to revise. Hopefully this evening will empower students and parents. We have deliberately placed it before the Easter holidays so that students can use the holiday to put in place some of the ideas they have learnt. We strongly recommend you attend this evening if possible.

What can you as parents do now?

These next few months will definitely be a challenge for many parents! We know that, whilst many students are independent, self motivated learners, others find it much more difficult to get started and this can cause tension and arguments. Particularly as the sun starts to shine (we hope!) and the nights get longer, it can be hard to get our young people to commit the necessary time to study at home.

Parents can help by:

- Ensuring that students have somewhere calm to work; preferably with a desk and resources such as paper, highlighters and pens.
- Encouraging students to have a realistic routine. This will vary from student to student, but it is broadly reasonable to expect students to do approximately 2 hours work per night. A student could therefore work from 5 pm – 7 pm and then spend time with their friends or get involved with leisure activities without feeling any guilt!
- You know your children. Some will thrive if you can get involved with their revision, asking questions and helping them with revision cards. Other students prefer to work alone and will bite your head off if you go near them! Just being there will support them.
- Providing a good diet and regular healthy snacks aids the function of the brain. Make sure your children are not skipping meals and try and encourage them to share proper snack/meal breaks with you.

- Ensure that your child attends school every day between now and the exam period. Most teachers will be finishing the teaching of their course and will shortly be doing in-lesson revision and exam practice. This provides a fantastic opportunity for students to consolidate their knowledge and skills in a structured and planned way.
- Be alert to stress and over work. Some of our students will put too much pressure on themselves and this could damage their mental and physical well being. If you feel your child is doing too much, encourage them to have a day off. If you are still concerned, please contact us so that we can work together to resolve this problem.

Booster Sessions

We will be looking later on to put in place booster sessions after school. We know that students often find it difficult to get started with their revision programmes and these sessions provide a structured and supported environment led by teaching staff. Some of these classes will be targeted at specific students, whilst others will be open to all students. We strongly recommend that students attend as many booster classes as they can. We will be forwarding a booster booklet at the beginning of the Summer Term.

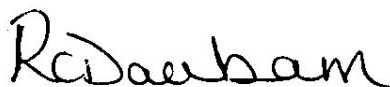
Exam Timetables

As usual exam timetables will be issued to each student before the exam season starts. Students should be encouraged to highlight those exams which are relevant to them. They will also receive personalised statements of entry in the next few months that will show each of their summer exams. It is important that this information is kept safe and that the students are very clear about when their exams are.

Over the last 3 years we have developed a very effective system within school which essentially removes study leave and provides students with lessons and “breakfast clubs” right up to the day of their exam. This has led to significant improvements in GCSE results. Details of the exact programme will be available after the Easter holiday.

In the current economic climate, it is more important than ever that our young people leave education with the best possible portfolio of qualifications so that their future life chances are maximised. I hope that you will be able to support us in this endeavour by attending the Revision Evening on Thursday 23rd February 2012. I will look forward to seeing you there.

Yours sincerely



R Dawbarn
Head of Year 11