



July 2018

Dear Parent or Carer

I wanted to write to you all at the end of term to thank you for your support throughout this year, and to outline some of the changes you can expect to see in September.

Timing of the School Day

We have reviewed the timing of the school day which was introduced in September 2017 and have decided to make some small changes. There will be **no change to the official start and end time of the day** but we are introducing a short registration period in the morning. This is primarily for safeguarding reasons; we would like your child’s tutor to see them and register them each morning before lessons begin, to make sure they are prepared to learn (safe; well; in the correct uniform and with the equipment they need for the day). This time will also be used for a weekly assembly to help improve communication with the year group. The new timing of the day will be as follows:

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8.30–8.40	STEP 1 Assembly Y11	STEP 1 Assembly Y10	STEP 1 Assembly Y9	STEP 1 Assembly Y8	STEP 1 Assembly Y7
8.40–9.40	Period 1	Period 1	Period 1	Period 1	Period 1
9.40–10.40	Period 2	Period 2	Period 2	Period 2	Period 2
10.40–10.55	Break	Break	Break	Break	Break
10.55–11.50	Period 3	Period 3	Period 3	Period 3	Period 3
11.50–12.50	Period 4	Period 4	Period 4	Period 4	Period 4
12.50–1.30	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1.30–2.30	Period 5	Period 5	Period 5	Period 5	Period 5
2.30–3.00	STEP 2	STEP 2	End of School	STEP 2	STEP 2

Lunch for Year 7 students will begin 5 minutes earlier than shown above, to allow them to eat first and ensure that we can accommodate all of our students.

Planners

In September, your child will be issued with a planner which they must bring to every lesson, every day. The planner will allow students to record homework and other commitments and deadlines, and organise their time effectively. It will also be used by teachers every lesson to record merits/stamps which form the basis of our new rewards system.

Students accumulate merits for their effort and engagement in lessons. These are counted each week and lead to rewards or recognition at the end of each half-term, term and year. Those of you who attended our awards ceremonies this year will have seen the powerful motivational effect of rewarding and recognising student achievement. Finally, the planner will be another way for parents to communicate with tutors. We would ask that you check your child's planner each week.

Assessment and Reporting

We are making a number of significant changes to our assessment and reporting systems next year, one of which is to **no longer** collect or report a "working at" grade. These changes are based on current thinking and research about how meaningful a GCSE grade really is in years 7 or 8 (for example).

From September, we will be splitting the curriculum into teaching blocks (of 8-10 weeks each). There will be a classroom-based assessment at the end of each teaching block, in each subject, and we will report on the percentage students achieved in that assessment, and how that compares with the average for the cohort. We will also report on whether a student is progressing in relation to other students, from where they started.

We won't be issuing target grades until the end of Year 9 or start of Year 10 because we believe that assigning targets too early puts unnecessary pressure on students. The only GCSE grades we will show on reports will be from Year 10 onwards. These will be *predicted* GCSE grades (i.e. what we believe students will achieve by the end of Year 11 if they continue to make the level of progress they are currently making).

There will be fewer data rounds per year (typically 3 per year) as it is more important to focus on teaching and learning than on measuring and reporting.

So, in summary: a simpler system which focuses on raw marks and not a hypothetical grade assigned to that mark; fewer data rounds; no targets at Key Stage 3; and a clearer indication of whether students are falling behind their peers or performing well relative to them, so that we can intervene and support more effectively.

Changes to our staffing structure

Some of you will be aware that our subjects have been grouped together into faculties (called directorates). From September, this will change and the majority of subjects will stand alone in departments, with each department run by a Curriculum Leader. The only real impact of this from the point of view of parents will be that some of the contact details will change; our website will be updated over the summer holidays to reflect this

Arrangements for the Start of Term

The new academic year will begin on Tuesday 4th September for students in Years 7 and 12 only. All students will be in school from Wednesday 5th September 2018.

Classes

We are making some changes to the way students are grouped next year; we believe that this will help them make progress and improve the way we teach. The class numbers and sets you are used to may therefore change and you will see this when your child receives his/her timetable in September. For your information:

Years 7 and 8

Most students will be taught in mixed ability classes for all subjects except maths although there will be a smaller class in each year group for students who need a bit more support with reading and literacy. Students will be grouped into X or Y bands (the bands are split equally by ability and simply allow us to timetable lessons more efficiently).

Years 9-11

Students will be taught in mixed ability classes in option subjects, and in sets for maths, English and science. The curriculum leader in each subject is responsible for setting students according to their ability and individual need. Students may change sets throughout their time in Key Stage 4, depending on their progress in lessons. Please note: we have moved away from having two bands (X and Y) to only one, so it is perfectly possible for your child to have moved from X2 in Y9 (for example) to Set 3 in Y10. This does not mean that they are performing less well or making less progress than they were but simply that all the students are now in a single band.

Enrichment Week

Another change for next year will be the introduction of an enrichment week. We are very proud of the range of lunchtime and after school activities running in school throughout the year. There is a timetable on the "Student Life" section of our website, with activities including surfing, climbing, art, choir, coding and history. An enrichment week will allow us to offer a range of extended activities for all students (from trips and visits in the UK and abroad, to activities based in school which suit a range of interests). Further details will be provided next year on how the students can select their activities. We have provisionally identified w/c 8th July for our enrichment week.

We are considering using enrichment week as an opportunity for students in Year 10 to do work experience. Further information will be provided next year but we are aware that some parents may be able to help us offer opportunities to our students. If that is the case then please don't hesitate to get in touch. Mr. Ward will be co-ordinating this aspect of our provision.

Key Dates

Please find below some of the key dates you will need for next year. These have already been sent out to you; the addition of an enrichment week has meant that two or three of the dates of other events have changed. These are highlighted in red below.

All of these key dates will be included on the calendar on our website:

Term 1

- Half-Term 1: 4th or 5th September 2018 – Thursday 18th October 2018
- **Friday 19th October 2018: Teacher Training Day: students do not attend**
- Half-Term 2: Monday 29th October – Friday 21st December 2018

Term 2

- Half Term 3: Monday 7th January 2019 – Thursday 14th February 2019
- **Friday 15th February 2019: Teacher Training Day: students do not attend**
- Half-Term 4: Monday 25th February 2019 – Friday 5th April 2019

Term 3

- Half-Term 5: Tuesday 23rd April 2019 – Friday 26th May 2019
- Half-Term 6: Monday 3rd June 2019 – Friday 19th July 2019

Provisional Dates for Parents' Evenings: 2018/19

Year 7

- Drop-in session to meet tutors: Monday 15th October 2018
- X Band Parents' Evening: Thursday 17th January 2019
- Y Band Parents' Evening: Thursday 24th January 2019

Year 8

- Options Evening: Tuesday 15th January 2019
- Parents' Evening: Tuesday 12th February 2019

Year 9 (NB: please note both dates for now; further info will be provided)

- Parents' Evening (half of year group): Thursday 14th March 2019
- Parents' Evening (half of year group): Thursday 21st March 2019

Year 10

- Parents' Evening: Thursday 4th July 2019 (change from previously published due to enrichment week being added to the calendar)

Year 11

- Sixth Form Open Evening: Tuesday 9th October 2018
- Parents' Evening 1: Tuesday 27th November 2018
- Parents' Evening 2: Monday 1st April 2019

Year 12/13

- Year 12: Welcome to Sixth Form Evening – Thursday 13th September 2018
- Parents' Evening: Thursday 28th February 2019

Other Important Dates: 2018/19

- Open Evening for Year 6 Parents: Thursday 27th September 2018
- Year 10 Exams: Week Commencing 17th June 2019
- Year 11 Mock Exams 1: Week Commencing 7th January 2019
- Year 11 Mock Exams 2: Weeks commencing 25th February and 4th March 2019
- Year 12 Exams: Weeks commencing 3rd June and 10th June 2019
- Year 13 Mock Exams: Week commencing 21st January 2019

Uniform

Our new uniform will be compulsory for Y7 and optional for other year groups in September. The uniform requirements document on our website provides guidance and examples of acceptable footwear. Please note that the rules regarding footwear apply to ALL students, whether they wear the new uniform or not.

Finally

Thank you once again for your support during the year. Many of the changes we have made were recognised positively in the Ofsted report published in June, but we know there is still work to be done; our ambition is to be recognised as outstanding in all areas within two years but we couldn't have made the progress we have without the support of parents, staff and students. I hope that you have a lovely holiday and look forward to working with you again next year.

Yours sincerely



Andy Byers
Headteacher