



11 September 2018

Dear Parent/Carer

I hope that you all had a lovely holiday and that your child has settled back into school, or in the case of Year 7, that they are enjoying their first two weeks with us.

Exam Results

We are celebrating an excellent set of examination results this summer which is testament to the hard work of the students who were in Year 11 and Year 13 last year, as well as our staff. As you will be aware, we made some significant changes in school last year and although these were recognised by Ofsted with a very positive report in May, we wanted to demonstrate the impact of those changes.

Headline Figures	2016	2017	2018
% students achieving grades 9-4 in English & Maths	71%	66%	75%
% of students achieving grades 9-5 in English & Maths	N/A	41%	56%

The improvement in our GCSE results was outstanding. 78% of students achieved a grade 5 or above in English; the joint highest of the 31 schools in County Durham. In maths too, we saw a significant improvement from last year. For more information on our exam results (and the improvement in our A Level performance), please see our website.

Rewards and Sanctions

I am taking assemblies with Years 7-11 this week to help emphasise the routines which we introduced last year. Your child will bring home a booklet on our Rewards and Sanctions, which has been handed out at the end of the assembly. Behaviour in school is outstanding and this is because we manage it consistently and fairly. Please continue to support us in doing so. One key addition this year is the introduction of planners. Students must bring them to school every day; they are not only used to record homework, but students accumulate stamps for their good behaviour and attendance, their positive contributions to class, and the quality of their work. Certificates, badges and awards can be achieved when enough stamps have been collected; details are in the booklet.

Lunchtime, Uniform & Extra-Curricular Activities

We are aware that the lunchtime queues at the start of term have been a little slow, as new students are getting used to the systems (we also have a bigger school roll as we are oversubscribed in Year 7). We will review our systems at the end of next week and make adjustments if necessary to ensure that students are served in good time. Our new uniform looks fantastic and I would like to thank parents for their support with this. We know that there were a few teething problems with ordering (for which I apologise) but we will be reviewing this too, with a view to making improvements next year.

Finally, we will be posting the programme of extra-curricular activities taking place this term on our website on Friday, and sharing it with students in their STEP groups. I hope that as many students as possible will find something they can participate in and enjoy. I hope that the rest of the term goes well and look forward to working with you all this year.

Yours sincerely

Andy Byers

Headteacher

