

Dear Parent/Carer,

Unfortunately, COVID restrictions mean we cannot run our usual Introduction to Key Stage 4 Evening which was scheduled for tomorrow, Thursday 15th October 2020. However, experience shows that pupils are far more likely to achieve and exceed their potential when parents and school work closely together. I will therefore be addressing the key points from this evening in this letter. I will also post a PDF copy of the PowerPoint presentation in the Exams and Revision page which can be found within the Parents section of the College website.

Students undoubtedly feel more pressure when they embark on their Key Stage 4 courses. This is to be expected, unlike Key Stage 3, the subjects that students have chosen to study will end in public examinations and the results will help determine future pathways. Students will also have targets for each subject and will feel the pressure to achieve these targets. Staff at the College will keep you fully informed about your son/daughter's progress and advise you should any concerns arise; please also keep us informed about anything happening out of school that might impact on your child's learning in school.

You will be aware that the situation regarding assessment is currently under review. Some adaptations to 2021 examinations have been made for the current Year 11 to mitigate the disruption to learning caused by COVID. At present we are still running our Year 10 courses in line with 'normal' assessment expectations, which for some subjects will include the completion of Non -Exam Assessment (NEA). As these NEAs count towards the student's final grade it is vital that they engage fully with this element of the course and ensure that they meet the internal deadlines that are set. As key dates approach, subjects may run coursework workshops and revision groups; please encourage your son/daughter to participate as fully as possible in these, as the sessions can have a significant impact on final outcomes. More details of subjects which contain NEA can be found on the PowerPoint presentation. Students have also been issued with the JCQ Regulations.

As parents, carers and teachers our role is fundamentally that of providing an equal balance of support and challenge. However, it is also important to stress that students' attitude towards learning will have a significant impact on their ability to be successful. In the current climate, with uncertainty surrounding regional and national lockdowns and the impact this may have on schools, it is imperative that students recognise the importance of taking responsibility for their own learning. Commitment, motivation and resilience are all key factors in determining student success.

All students in Years 10 and 11 are expected to maintain and build on the good 'afterschool' work habits established in Key Stage 3 to consolidate and deepen their learning in their various exam subjects. We would expect students in Years 10 and 11 to spend around 1-2 hours every school evening (and no more than 4 hours at the weekend) on tasks set by class teachers, or if no specific tasks have been set, on independent study. Students should not spend more than two hours an evening (or more than 4 hours at the weekend) on school-based work as it is important that they maintain a healthy balance between work and other activities.

With regards to independent study all students have access to online resources posted by their subject teachers on Microsoft Teams and have access to GCSE POD via the College Moodle. Students may also be directed to use other online learning platforms such as Seneca Learning, BBC Bitesize, Duolingo and Corbett Maths or be directed to use revision guides. These resources provide good coverage of subject content and have revision activities to support learning.

If you have any questions about the information contained in this letter, please do get in touch.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sara Jacobs', written in a cursive style.

Sara Jacobs
Deputy Principal