

BME/PRH/AST/GHA

9 September 2019

Dear Parents and Carers

Re: Key Information and Support for the Year Ahead

We were positively delighted to welcome back our Year 11 students last week and as they embarked on their final two terms at GCSE. With only 245 calendar and 134 actual school days remaining before the start of next summer's public examinations, we feel it is essential that we start the academic year with some timely reminders to students and you, our parents and carers, on how best to make the most of this precious time.

Whilst there will undoubtedly be instances of stress and worry as the examinations approach, by starting as early as possible and by doing a few simple things now (as well as continuing to do them throughout the year of course), this will ultimately enable our Year 11 students to be better equipped and be as prepared as they possibly can moving forward.

Preparation

The best way to ensure minimal stress is to revise consistently as effort + time = success! Attached to this letter is a blank revision timetable and it should be populated to identify what your son/daughter needs to revise and, very importantly, whilst also blocking in free/social/sporting times and family events. Students must also endeavor to prioritise subjects/topics they feel they need to spend the most time on.

Time spent on revision

Students do not need to study from 8am-10pm every weekend and holiday or from 3:10pm-11:00pm every night. 40 minutes per subject and three subjects in one evening at any one time should be enough to assist revision if this is done regularly and again, very importantly, if it is started now. They should also break up the time spent revising by taking a 5-minute break every 25/30 minutes or so, as it has been found to be more beneficial to revise an individual subject for 25/30 minutes three times a week than the same subject for 90 minutes just once a week.

Revision techniques

The best types of revision depend on the individual learner of course but the most successful methods include:

- condensing information from exercise books into mind maps or onto post it notes;
- flashcards can be created or purchased to create quick-fire questions or memory recall;
- RAMBAM - read for a minute, bullet the information for a minute;
- reciting and teaching – read the notes and then explain those notes to another person means students have to think about what has been written in order to get key points across to the listener;
- power hour revision - choose a past paper question (google your subject, level and examination board. For example, Geography is AQA), revise for 20 minutes in terms of what needs to be known for a specific question and then answer it under strict examination conditions (timed and without support). Afterwards, the question can be marked using the same paper's marking scheme or with the help of your subject teacher; and
- online websites such as getrevising.co.uk, bbc.co.uk/schools/revision and s-cool.co.uk

Further revision tips

- taking breaks and doing something fun or that you enjoy during the break from revision;
- studies have shown that using colours on revision notes, mind maps or flash cards can also trigger recall;
- studying before bed (but before you get too tired) can lead to significantly better retention;
- around 75% of the brain consists of water. Therefore, keeping it hydrated and avoiding energy drinks (caffeine) is simple but very important; and arguably the most important of all
- eating well and sleeping well!

May I also take this opportunity to make you aware of key dates for our Year 11 students this academic year? These will be discussed further in student assemblies, form time and during the upcoming information evening itself:

- Tuesday 17 September 2019 – Year 11 Information Evening
- Wednesday 18 September 2019 - Year group and individual photographs
- Thursday 10 October 2019 - Plume College Open Evening
- Thursday 17 October 2019 – Year 11 Consultation Evening
- Thursday 7 November 2019 – The Plume Academy Annual Careers Fair
- Friday 15 November 2019 – Plume College application deadline
- Monday 25 November 2019 – One-week written mock examinations in Maths, English and Science
- Monday 2 December 2019 – two-week practical mock examinations
- Monday 9 March 2020 – One week written mock examinations in Maths, English and Science
- Monday 11 May 2020 – GCSE written public examinations start
- Friday 22 May 2020 – Last teaching day for all Year 11 students-
- Wednesday 24 June 2020 – GCSE contingency date so keep this date open and available
- Tuesday 7 July 2020 – Year 11 Prom

In order to support you and your child through this vitally important year, we would like to invite you to our Year 11 Parents Information Evening on **Tuesday 17 September at 6.30pm in the stage hall of our Fambridge Road Campus**. The evening will aim to provide parents and carers with a guide to our Year 11 students' next eight months ahead and how to best support them through this. The evening will also cover issues such as key events, the curriculum, assessment and reporting, as well as examination preparation.

We look forward to seeing you next Tuesday and hope that the evening will help to provide you with a more informed outlook of the year ahead. However, if you are unable to make this meeting and would like to arrange a more convenient time to discuss any points raised in this letter, do not hesitate to contact one of us direct.

Yours sincerely



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Fambridge Road Campus lead



Miss B Meltzer
Head of Year 11