

December 2011

To: Parents of pupils in Year 11

Dear Parents

It was good to see so many of you at the recent Sixth Form and Beyond evening. If you were unable to attend, you may like to know that information about Sixth Form courses can be found on the school website under Senior School, Sixth Form Information. There are separate prospectuses for IB and A Level courses.

GCSE Trial Examinations and Study Leave

The GCSE Trial Examinations for Year 11 will take place from Wednesday 25 January 2012 up to and including Friday 3 February. All pupils will be involved in the Chemistry paper on the morning of 25 January, but are on study leave from Period 3 on that day until the end of examination period. Their last examination, in which they will all be involved, is the Biology paper on the afternoon of Friday 3 February. Normal lessons will resume on Monday 6 February. However, Thursday afternoon Games will take place for all pupils as normal in both weeks. Please note that the coach for Hilsea will leave later than normal on Thursday 26 February because of the late finish of the English examination. The full schedule of Trial Examinations is enclosed (and is also available on the VLE under Pupil Information, Exam Information).

Additionally, on Tuesday 24 January, those studying Geography will sit their SDME in the afternoon. As this is a public examination they may, if they wish, take the morning of 24 January as study leave. Please note that there will not be facilities for private study in school on that day and so pupils involved in the SDME should either come in for lessons as normal for the morning or come in at lunchtime. They should aim to be in school by 1.45 pm at the latest.

During study leave there will be no timetabled lessons and pupils do not normally need to attend school except for when they have an examination. However, pupils may be required to attend revision sessions, seminars, instrumental music lessons or to see a member of staff. Pupils may use the school's recognised study areas (the Library or, at busy times, classrooms allocated for private study) during normal school hours and may use common room areas at school break and lunch times. They may not enter the Dining Hall before the normal time for their year group. Pupils coming into school either for examinations or to study must wear full school uniform. If not sitting an examination they must sign the register which is available near the security office under the main school archway. This register need not be signed if a pupil comes into school within 30 minutes of the start of an examination they are taking.

Please impress upon your son or daughter the need to prepare carefully for these examinations. The Trial Examinations are an opportunity to sit the GCSE papers under examination conditions and prepare for the summer. The preparation work done at this stage will be of great benefit during the revision build up next term and in the summer term and a strong set of results in February will give confidence for the final examinations. I would encourage pupils to revise thoroughly over the Christmas break and then to address any weaknesses highlighted in the Trial Examinations with their subject teachers afterwards. On Tuesday 10 January there will be a special examination briefing assembly in John Pounds for Year 11.

Following the trial examination period, we are organising a study skills/revision morning in the Gym for Year 10 pupils. This will be on Friday 10 February (Inset Day). You may recall that this event was offered to current Year 11 pupils last year but those who did not attend last time are welcome to attend this year. Letters inviting you to apply for this will be sent out shortly after Christmas.

There will be an opportunity to discuss the results of the Trial Examinations with your son or daughter's subject teachers and Tutor at the Year 11 Parents' Evening on Thursday 1 March 2012. You will receive a letter about this after Christmas.

I would like to draw your attention to the Year 11 Sixth Form Subject Forum. This takes place in the Bawtree Building from 6.30 pm to 8.00 pm on Monday 9 January 2012 and will be an opportunity for pupils and parents to discuss A Level and IB courses and options with representatives of academic departments and members of the Sixth Form team. A separate letter about this is enclosed with the end of term mailing.

Along with the end of term mailing you should receive a full academic report on your son/daughter's progress. I would encourage pupils to read their reports carefully and to act upon the advice given at this stage. They should also not hesitate to ask for further assistance from subject teachers if it is needed and to attend clinics and extra revision session as advised. If parents have any concerns please do contact your son or daughter's Tutor in the New Year to discuss these.

Finally, you may find it useful for your longer term planning to know that the last date for GCSE and IGCSE examinations has been set (provisionally) for 27 June 2012.

I do hope you have an enjoyable Christmas.

Yours sincerely

N G Waters
Head of Years 9 - 11