



23<sup>rd</sup> November 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

## Teaching & Learning Update

Further to my letter to parents last half term, outlining our plans for Remote Learning, I am writing today to update you on the progress of Teaching & Learning in our classrooms and to outline some of the key features of our work. During lesson visits, throughout this term, I have been delighted to see students fully engaged with their learning and demonstrating a return to excellent study habits. Students have clearly been focused on closing gaps and they are evidently motivated to aim high and achieve their very best. Teachers have been focused on striking an important balance between maintaining and supporting students' mental health and wellbeing, which remains our priority, as well as supporting students to make accelerated progress in their studies. Teachers are planning lessons and resources that ensure we are fully capitalising on the time we have in classrooms as part of our continued commitment to delivering an exceptional education for all.

### *Assessment*

As you will be aware, during the first half term, we made the decision to suspend formal assessment. This was to support students' full return to the Collegiate and to ensure the focus was on students successfully re-engaging with learning and re-establishing positive learning habits, before beginning to assess and award grades/marks. This was entirely appropriate given the circumstances, and instead teachers were using a variety of low-stakes assessments to ascertain any gaps in students' understanding. During this half term, however, more formal assessment has begun in order to be able to report on progress more confidently. These assessments are spread across the term to safeguard against students becoming overwhelmed or anxious.

### *Setting*

With formal assessment beginning again, Directors of Learning will begin to look closely at the composition of teaching groups over the remainder of this term. The curriculum that is followed across all ability-based teaching groups is entirely equitable and there are no differences to the options available to students in the future. The group that a student is placed into allows teachers to stretch and support each student as far as possible and will maximise their achievement opportunities. Students in every group are challenged and pushed to achieve the highest standards of which they are capable. Directors of Learning will use a range of data and information from across subjects, as well as feedback from teachers, to decide on any teaching group changes. Directors of Learning will be in contact with parents, to outline any changes to teaching groups, during Half Term 3.

### *Independent Study*

Independent Study is an important part of our work in securing students the very best grades they are capable of and seeks to consolidate and extend learning that has taken place in lessons, or can be used to effectively prepare students for their forthcoming studies. Independent Study has also become an even more important aspect of students' work, as teachers will be using this as a vehicle to close gaps in either knowledge or skill for individual subjects and this will further support students in their own personalised development. Students will receive support materials to allow for independent completion of work, such as website links, key vocabulary and modelled examples, through Google Classroom, where teachers will also indicate the time students should take to complete this work. Parents can assist their child with Independent Study by monitoring: the amount they are completing; the quality and the time taken; as well as supporting their children with organisation and by providing a suitable, quiet place where students can work uninterrupted.

### *Parents Evenings*

We hugely value the opportunity to meet with parents to discuss students' progress, attitude to learning, independent study, as well as areas for further development. Therefore, we have been delighted to have already 'met' with both Year 11 and Year 13 parents virtually and are very much looking forward to 'meeting' with Year 8 parents this week, and with Year 7, 9, 10 and Year 12 parents later in the year.

I have been incredibly impressed with how positively students have returned to their studies and I would like to thank you again for your ongoing support during these unprecedented times. It is important that we continue to maintain our high standards and expectations and that we retain, to the very best of our ability, the continuity of your child's education, progress, and wellbeing.

Yours sincerely

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