

15 September 2016



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Dear Parent/Guardian/Carer

Year 11 is now well and truly underway. I would like to take this opportunity to say 'welcome back' at the start of what will prove to be a decisive year in shaping your child's future.

I recently wrote to all parents celebrating the success of our headline examination results from last year. Once again students have performed above the national average at GCSE and I am also pleased to report a pleasing set of results for our first cohort of 6th Formers.

Success like this does not come easy, and is by no means guaranteed, just because you attend a great school. Success is the product of a strong relationship between home and school. The students who succeed this year will be those who work hard at school and then follow this up with conscientious and diligent study during their hours at home, in the evening and at the weekend. It is important that we all recognise that this will be your child's most challenging year so far.

I thought it appropriate that I highlight a few key points that might help us navigate this year together. If we do this well, then your child will certainly achieve everything that he/she is capable of.

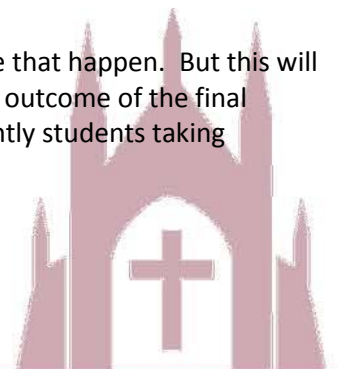
Home/School Communication

I can promise you that at some point throughout this year students will become stressed and anxious. This is normal. I would be getting stressed and anxious if my students did not experience this some of the time in Year 11. The key here is how we help manage this together. Good eating and sleeping habits are critical. I would encourage mobile phones to be charged overnight outside of the bedroom where your child sleeps.

Lots of positive support from home and school are equally important. If you or your child do have any concerns – please talk to us. We will be able to help. Don't wait - Year 11 will fly by - there are only 29 weeks left until the exam season as I write this letter to you! In the first instance contact your child's Mentor or subject teacher directly. You can also contact Mr Williams, the Head of Year and as ever, I am very happy to support students and families personally if you feel this would be helpful.

Taking Responsibility

High quality teaching and learning remains the key to student success and we will make that happen. But this will not be sufficient to secure success and there are many factors which may influence the outcome of the final examination results. These include motivation, attitude to learning, and most importantly students taking responsibility for shaping their own future.



Taking time now to plan a personal revision schedule is critical. Students will spend 25 hours a week in school and they may also attend some after school revision sessions. They must build on this by studying consistently at home. I would recommend a minimum of 2 hours a night during this term and increasing this as we move towards the final exams. I would also encourage students to study more frequently as they approach their mock exams in December. I have often said to the students, 'You will get the examination results you deserve - work hard and put the hours in. If you do this now you will benefit from this short-term hard work for the rest of your life.'

What happens next?

Throughout Year 11 students will be offered frequent advice and guidance about 'What happens next?' It might be 6th Form at TBOWA, or continued studies elsewhere and some students may seek an apprenticeship with an alternative provider. We will work with you in supporting your child in making the right decision for his/her future. We have found that if a student has a clear idea of what path they want to take post 16 then this acts as a real motivating factor throughout Year 11. Please encourage your child to think seriously about 'What happens next?' We will be holding our 6th Form Open Evening on Tuesday 11th October and I would strongly advise you to attend this event. If you would like to meet with the Careers Team or myself to discuss your child's post 16 options please let us know.

Standards

You know that we have embedded a culture of 'High Expectation - No Excuses' at TBOWA. I am really proud of the way in which Year 11 lead on this by role-modelling all that is expected in terms of attitude to learning, behaviour, attendance, punctuality and uniform. I can assure you that there will be a zero-tolerance approach for students who do not adhere to our shared 'High Expectations' and I would be disappointed if the school needed to intervene for non-adherence in Year 11. It is important that you can have full confidence that the school will not allow any individuals to interfere with your child's education. Holidays during Year 11 will not be authorised. As ever, your support with this is invaluable.

It will all come around very quickly.....

It really does seem a very short time ago that I was showing you and your Year 6 child around TBOWA. Where did that time go? And haven't things changed?

To mark the end of Year 11 there are a number of TBOWA traditions. These have to be earned and are by no means a right and participation in these events is by invitation only. To guarantee receiving an invitation, students will need to demonstrate a consistently good attitude to learning and very good attendance. I am, of course, referring to the Farewell Candle Assembly and, perhaps most significantly for many students, the Year 11 Prom. These are all great events and I would want to see all of Year 11 receive an invitation – however, it will be very much up to them!

I really do wish all of you, parents and students, the very best of luck for this exciting year. Please do not underestimate the challenge ahead. I firmly believe that this year group has the potential to outperform all previous year groups. They are a talented group of students. If we work together then dreams can become reality and students will be rightly rewarded for their hard work in this final year.

Best wishes



Paul McKeown
Principal

Key Year 11 Dates

Tuesday 27 th September	4.15-7.30pm	Parent Consultation Evening
Tuesday 11 th October	5.30-7.30pm	6 th Form Open Evening
Tuesday 7 th February	4.15-7.30pm	Parent Consultation Evening