



CHAILEY SCHOOL

A Specialist Language and Humanities College
Headteacher: Mrs Helen Key MA (Ed)

9th February 2017

Dear Parents and Carers,

Study Leave/Prom Passport/Changes to GCSE Maths and English

As you know, Chailey School already has in place a comprehensive support programme for Year 11 students to assist them in achieving the best possible results in their final GCSE exams. Whilst the additional lunchtime and after school sessions are being well-attended and are proving hugely beneficial and valuable to students, the single most important window of opportunity for learning comes during their contact time, in lessons, with their subject teachers.

Study Leave

Students begin their written GCSEs on the 15th May and these exams continue right up to the 20th June. In school all teachers will be focussed on examination technique and revision right up until the final exam in their subject. We will also be putting on compulsory 'preparation lessons' prior to the exams. We all know that all exams are important but English and Mathematics carry the extra burden of being seen as critical by employers and higher education establishments. As such it is important that all students remain in school full time until their GCSE examinations in English and Maths have been taken.

Therefore in 2017 study leave for Year 11 will begin from the morning on **Wednesday 14th June**. Until that time all Year 11 students are required in school full time. Students will be required to wear full school uniform until the beginning of term 6, Monday the 5th June, when they may come to school in appropriate and comfortable clothes.

Prom Passport

There are always some students who find trying 100% beyond them, as they near the end of their time with us. Even some of the most dedicated students can feel that they have 'done enough' and that all will be well in their looming GCSE exams. We know, that as parents, you share our drive for your sons and daughters to do their very best in their exams – indeed we know from our contact with you how much you are supporting your children at this key time and how focussed you are on doing all you can to ensure that they work hard! We wish to eradicate any feelings of comfort and complacency for the benefit of all students.

We all want our young people to be able to do well so that they can all look forward to a successful and positive future and, as such, we are writing to let you know about our 'Prom Passport'. This initiative was introduced last year and was really successful. The purpose of this passport is to ensure that, alongside achieving positive GCSE grades, students have the additional incentive of obtaining a confirmed place at their Chailey School Prom in July – an event which is central to their thinking in the last few months of Year 11.

The 'Prom Passport' will operate as follows. In every lesson currently, students have the opportunity to be awarded either achievement or behaviour points. These points are generated into a report at the end of each week which identifies how many achievement points have been awarded, alongside the number of behaviour points. The expectation of Chailey School is that students do not receive any behaviour points (which can be given for disruption, lack of focus in class, lack of work or poor quality work and uniform issues) in any lessons – this is particularly the case in Year 11.

With effect from our return to school after the half-term break (Monday, 20th February 2017) until Friday, 12th May 2017 (the main exams begin on Monday, 15th May 2017) all Year 11 students will be allocated a starting total of 50 points. Any behaviour points that they generate in lessons will be deducted from this starting total on a weekly basis. Any student that reaches or falls below zero will initially lose the option to attend the Prom. However, students will be given the opportunity to earn their Prom place back by being placed on a report with specified criteria that they must





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then meet for the remainder of their time at Chailey (for example, concentration and effort in lessons, being on time to lessons, handing in good quality homework etc). Should any student who is placed on report, then fail to meet the specified criteria, they would lose their place at Prom for which the money paid will be non-refundable.

The intention in introducing this programme is to ensure that all students are applying themselves fully in the classroom and are focused solely on making the required progress to be successful in their exams. In addition, as all students have the same 50 point starting position, all have an equal chance to secure their place at Prom. Of course, we sincerely hope that no student would make the choice to behave inappropriately in the classroom at such an important stage of their education and, as such, do not anticipate having to deny anyone the opportunity to attend and enjoy their Prom.

Changes to GCSE Maths and English

You will be aware of the changes to GCSE English and Maths and the greater breadth and challenge of the papers. As a school we have been planning in detail how to prepare students for this new exam. Even the way the exam is marked has changed so that the grade your son/daughter receives will be in competition with other students nationally. In essence, we need students here to do better than students in other schools in order to get the best grade possible. In addition, students not achieving the required 'good' pass will be required to retake the exam at college/sixth form.

To help the planning process we have made some changes to calendared events. There will be a second series of trial exams in English and Maths for all students from Monday 27th February to Wednesday 1st March. This is a change from the original calendar which shows the second trial English and Maths exams as being on the 20th and 21st February. We will be using the results to help support our lessons for the remainder of Year 11.

It may come as no surprise to you but we are finding that many students did not prepare well for the first trial exams. Many students tell us they sit in their rooms and say they are revising but in reality they are not. It would be very helpful to them if you are able to actively support their revision. If you are able to give up as little as 15 minutes to talk to them about their revision e.g. an area of maths they are revising or what they think a poem means in English this will greatly help. It is never too late for students to really start revising and so any support would be greatly appreciated.

On another note, we are really excited to have obtained two 'apps' to support revision in Maths and English Literature. Students will be able to download these to their phones. We will use them in school but would also encourage you to promote their use outside of school.

Thank you for your support in helping us to maintain the motivation and focus of our Year 11 students so that they have the best possible outcomes this summer.

Yours sincerely

Helen Key
Headteacher

