

November 2018

Dear Year 9 parent,

We are at a crucial and very busy time of the year when clear communication between school and home is essential. As such, please see some key information below specific to Year 9, which will hopefully help us to continue to work successfully together over the coming months.

### Learning Manager

Miss Brown has now been appointed as Learning Manager for Year 9. She will be with the year group until they finish at the end of Year 11. She has already had a positive influence on many students. Should you have any pastoral concerns, she should be your first point of contact. Miss Brown works very closely with Mr Rushton who is the Pastoral Lead for Years 8 and 9. Please contact Mr Rushton if you have any concerns about behaviour, attendance or welfare. Mrs Booth is the Progress Director for Key Stage 3. Please contact her if you have any questions or queries about your child's attainment and progress. Contact details for the Year 9 team are detailed below:

Name	Role	Email Address
Miss Brown	Learning Manager	<a href="mailto:cbrown@roydsschool.org">cbrown@roydsschool.org</a>
Mr Rushton	Pastoral Lead	<a href="mailto:crushton@roydsschool.org">crushton@roydsschool.org</a>
Mrs Booth	Progress Leader: Key Stage 3	<a href="mailto:lbooth@roydsschool.org">lbooth@roydsschool.org</a>

### Forthcoming Examinations: Sports Science

Students studying Sports Science will be sitting their first 'proper' examination in January; this contributes towards 25% of the students' final mark. I have been impressed by the students' attitude towards independent study and revision. The festive period is an opportunity for the students to take a break from the daily routine of school, however, revision must continue over this period. GCSE examinations are hard! The best analogy I can give is the similarity of training to run a marathon. Students have been 'training' hard in the build up to the exam, but if training/revision stops, their performance will regress. We all know the awful feeling of exercising for the first time when you haven't trained for a while! Sitting an exam ill-prepared is equally as painful! We therefore need your help. Please ensure your son/daughter now maintains continuous, manageable and sustainable revision between now and the examination in January. As a minimum at this stage, they should be aiming to complete an hour a day (or weekly equivalent). Please try to encourage them to intersperse revision between:

- Concentrating on gaps in knowledge - this is harder and easier to avoid, but there is no point continually just practising what you already know.
- Consolidating what they do know – retention and retrieval of key facts and knowledge is crucial, but once in the long term memory this should be a short, sharp quick revision activity.

## Maths

The Maths department are currently in the process of re-setting; this is something that will happen on a regular basis throughout the next three years. Students have now started the GCSE specification and progress tests are used each half term to assess students' knowledge and understanding. Tweaks are made to teaching groups to ensure all students are supported and challenged at the appropriate level. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Miss Hall ([khall@roydsschool.org](mailto:khall@roydsschool.org)) or Miss Clark ([hclark@roydsschool.org](mailto:hclark@roydsschool.org)) to discuss further.

## Attendance and Medical

The attendance of Year 9 is currently lower than it has been at any point since the year group started at Royds – this must improve. Too many students are taking sporadic days off from school. Thank you to parents who make their children attend daily – this will reap rewards in the end. I appreciate we all get genuinely ill from time to time but Year 9 generally need to show much greater resilience to everyday aches and pains.

To help parents, we have appointed a new School Nurse and Welfare Officer who is able to identify minor illnesses. If in doubt, please send your child to school. Mrs Kettlewell will be running a clinic each morning where she will be able to advise students if it is necessary to make a GP appointment, or in many cases suggest self-help strategies. She is also happy for parents to access the drop-in from 8.00 if you wish to discuss how symptoms can be managed in school. Mrs Kettlewell will also be reviewing all of our systems and medical-related procedures over the coming weeks.

## Independent Learning

The year group are now nearly a term into GCSE studies – this time next year they will be sitting mock examinations for option subjects. The reformed GCSEs are hard. Developing good independent learning habits is therefore key to success. In addition to completing standard homework tasks, students should be using GCSE Pod and Hegarty Maths to help consolidate learning and address any gaps in knowledge. Students all have passwords. At present, Year 9 are lagging behind both Year 10 and 11. This needs to improve. Please encourage your child to access these learning platforms on a daily basis, as they are proven to enhance attainment and progress because of the regular recall and retention skills that they develop. Throughout December, Year 9 have been set the challenge of watching three pods a day for three weeks. I'd love to be stamping as many planners as possible!

## Winter Weather

Potential school closures are a Headteacher's worst nightmare, as often you are damned if you do and damned if you don't! You can never please everyone. However, what is imperative is the health and safety of both our students and staff. Royds is quite unique in that our staff and students travel from a wide catchment area, which means the majority of our community travel to school very early.



The winter forecast suggests we could once again experience periods of heavy snow. I am keen to ensure the community is aware of our 'snow plan' protocol to enhance the quality of our communication. A decision will be made and posted on the school website by 7am. We will also send a text message, but the school website will be our main medium of communication. This should mean parents, staff and students are all clear. We will always endeavour to open the school, however, I do not want members of our community making unsafe and unnecessary journeys. An early decision may occasionally mean in hindsight that a wrong decision is made, therefore I would ask for your support in accepting this is not intentional but simply an educated decision based on the best interests of the safety of our community.

Should we need to close during the school day, we will contact parents by text. Please complete the attached reply slip below to ensure clear communication and the safe and appropriate dismissal of your child. We have learnt from last year and will be dismissing students from different venues via mode of transport rather than by year group.

### **Changes to detention, isolation and fixed term exclusion protocols**

As of January, we will be making changes to our systems. If your child follows school rules and meets our daily expectations as agreed in the home-school agreement, then nothing will change. However, following consultation with staff but predominantly with our students, we have decided to make changes to the consequences system. This is to ensure:

- We do not stand still and expectations of behaviour continue to rise.
- Sanctions act as a deterrent, rather than simply offer an 'easy' way out.
- Sanctions explore more restorative practice to prevent repeat offences.
- Students/parents refusing to comply/meet school expectations are clear of future pathways

### **Students removed from lessons**

We will not accept students disrupting the learning of others. If students are removed as a result of reaching an S3, they will be expected to copy a 'resilience' booklet when they are moved to another classroom, not simply sit doing nothing. Students will receive an after school detention for the removal, if they refuse to work, this consequence will be escalated to a 'resilience' isolation, where the period of time which they will be working continuously for will be doubled. Copying may seem archaic. However, resilience is a key to GCSE exam success. Students need to be able to write continuously for over 180 minutes in their English exams, therefore they will be working hard whilst developing a crucial examination skill.

### **Detentions**

We will be moving many of our detentions to break time. This is because 20 minutes loss of social time with friends has a far greater impact on students as a deterrent than an hour after school. It also makes detentions more equitable. For example, removal from lessons or truancy will still result



in an after school detention. However, if students are late before 9 am, are out of bounds or eating in a banned area then we feel a 20 minute detention is more appropriate. We will still use stickers in planners so you are aware of sanctions. Students will be informed by myself and Mr Abraham of the rules before Christmas and we publish a breakdown of the 'Shorter but Stronger' consequences on the school website for you as parents.

### **Isolation**

Mental health issues amongst young people are more prevalent than ever before. I have been conscious for a while of the potential negative impact of students sitting in booths for sometimes days at a time. Over the Christmas period our booths will be removed. This does not mean we are going soft or our expectations are diminishing. I simply want an isolation room that is fit for purpose, doesn't provide an easy option and ensures students don't want to be in there! As such, isolation will operate like an examination room. Students will complete shorter hours, but work harder whilst they are in isolation. Individual exam desks will all face the front. Students will be expected to work continuously; no heads on desks or refusing to work otherwise consequences will be escalated.

### **Fixed Term Exclusions (FTE)**

FTE have reduced by 70% since September. This is because as a first option, we are using alternative more appropriate sanctions which again avoid the 'easy option'. If your child refuses to comply, then expect an isolation or internal exclusion to be arranged at another local secondary school within the community. This is non-negotiable, simply an additional step within our protocols to ensure students understand the need to comply with and meet our expectations. As parents, we obviously need you to support us; this has certainly proved a fantastic deterrent thus far for students who have been sanctioned in this way.

Finally, many thanks for your support throughout my first term as Headteacher; it is much appreciated. It is both an honour and a privilege to work with your children and our staff on a daily basis. Should you have any questions or queries, then please do not hesitate to contact a member of the year group team.

Yours sincerely

Claire Robbins  
Headteacher

