



In all things faithful

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Headteacher

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Dear Parents of Yr11

Re: Key Messages for Yr11 Parents for the next 4-5 months

I write this as I believe that the next few months are, arguably, the most important few months of your child's education as it will largely determine what your child can and can't do in their futures. The following is to inform parents of what we are doing and what you can do to support your child.

Attendance

It is vital that your child makes every effort to attend school. I have repeatedly stated that there is a strong correlation between attendance and GCSE attainment. I have sent letters out to some students where attendance is causing concern. I ask that parents do everything possible to ensure that their child attends school regularly. 100% attendance should be the aim. *NB. If your child's attendance is unacceptable, it is highly likely their invitation to the Prom will be withdrawn. If that happens, I will have given your child every chance to improve their punctuality between now and the exams.*

Punctuality

In the last term, a significant and growing number of Yr11 students had poor punctuality. Again, this could show low expectations and a poor attitude towards learning. Like low attendance, this is not acceptable. I have sent letters out to students where punctuality is a concern. *NB. If your child's punctuality is unacceptable, it is highly likely their invitation to the Prom will be withdrawn. If that happens, I will have given your child every chance to improve their punctuality between now and the exams.*

Mock Exams

I would like to say that my staff and I were very impressed with the conduct and maturity of the Yr11 students during the December Mocks. These are robust and conducted under strict exam conditions. This has meant that if your child did not attend an exam, then they would have received a zero for that paper. The reality is that if this occurs in May/June then it is likely they will get zero in that exam paper. This has massive implications for their overall grade. The Mock results will be given to Yr11 students on Friday 12th January in a special assembly during Period 5. I ask that parents please speak to their children about their grades. Students will be sitting an extra English and Maths mock exam on **Friday 2nd February**. This mock day will not be repeated. This is another excellent opportunity to be 'exam ready'.

Revision

All students should be well rehearsed in revising for their exams. This should be between 2 and 3 hours each night. Not all students revise in the same manner but below are some tips:

- Have a quiet place to study with no distractions such as your phone.
- Do not make copious notes: use key words, concepts and spider diagrams.
- Test yourself regularly to ensure that you have remembered the subject content.
- Have a structured revision timetable including dedicated revision time at weekends.

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- Complete past exam questions and papers. This should build your confidence over time.

As always, please ask your teacher for advice – they are there to help and support you.

Intervention

To supplement work in class and revision at home we have planned targeted interventions in place. I list these below for your perusal.

- *Key To Success [K2S] Groups.* Focused intervention during form times most mornings. These have proved highly successful in the past.
- *Mrs Harrison's Wednesday 'Learning Techniques Study Club'.* This will take place **every Wednesday after school from 3.10pm to 4.00pm.** Your child will benefit from support with their attitude to learning, meeting homework deadlines and independent revision. This is an excellent opportunity for your child to boost their learning skills, which will support them with the demands of the upcoming GCSE examinations.
- *Half term intervention:* We will let you know, when ready, plans for intervention at half term, Easter and the end of May.
- *After school subject intervention.* This has started today, Monday 8th January and will continue until further notice. Please support us by ensuring your child attends if needed.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00am -8.50am			History/Geography	MFL	Options
3.10 - 4:10pm	English (History/Geography)	Maths (Options)	Food Computing	Sci X Band Span Y band	RE (Options)

Collectively, this intervention is designed to support your child. Where applicable, I ask that parents support this.

Behaviour V Attitudes to Learning

Overall, standards are very high at St Damian's. This is deliberate and creates a purposeful safe and highly conducive learning environment. The outcomes of having high standards and expectations are there for all to see. We have won a vast plethora of awards over many years, parental support is overwhelmingly very supportive and our GCSE outcomes are consistently well above both Tameside and National averages. The behaviour of the Yr11 students, like all our students, is great. However, their attitudes to learning are mixed. It is fundamental that students work hard in school and at home and 'believe' in themselves. But importantly, in school we try and instil the St Damian's mantra, 'Believe To Achieve', in them. If they are confident, positive and believe in themselves then they are more likely to achieve. And remember, **ALL** students can achieve their potential.

NB. As a reminder, our rules, for example, ensuring correct uniform, hair and make-up still applies to all students, including Yr11. My staff and I don't want to be wasting valuable time over these matters.

Support

As a school we recognise that the next few months can be very stressful for Yr11 students. And as a parent whose 2 children have been through GCSE exams, I know that this can be difficult for them. We have a graduated approach to supporting our children. The form tutor should be the first point of call if there is an issue.

We have two student support officers who are available to offer 1 - 1 support during lunch time drop-in sessions. Support is offered around anxiety, resilience, wellbeing, exam stress and goal setting. They are also able to sign post on to external agencies for a more tailored approach if pupils require intense support. Mrs Harrison, as HOY 11, is always available to support. If you need to speak to her, please contact her at school and she will be more than willing to help. Mrs Hunter, one of our student support officers is always available to support with issues such as exam stress. We will also be mentoring targeted students. On **20th March** we will be having another Yr11 parents evening to listen to any concerns I am always available to speak to parents on request. Working **together** is the best way for your child to achieve their full potential.

Prom

This is a great St Damian's tradition and is a highlight of the Yr11 calendar. It is a celebration of their hard work and 5 years at school. The Prom is by **invitation only** and is not an entitlement. As I have said in previous letters and in Yr11 assembly, any student who has been suspended twice will have their invitation withdrawn. Several students have had their invitation withdrawn. Last year, some students were disappointed that they couldn't attend and sadly, a very small number of the current Yr11 have had their invitation withdrawn. I don't want to withdraw any more students from the Prom, but I will not hesitate to do so if needed.

Post -16 Choices

All students should have applied for a college/apprenticeship course for when they leave St Damian's. Any student who is still unsure about their plans for September should visit the careers advisor during her weekly drop-in sessions on Tuesdays between 1.30pm and 2:00pm in the Literacy hub. It is really important that all students have something in place, even though their plans could change. Information about apprenticeships and job opportunities will be posted on the Yr11 Careers TEAMS page throughout the term as details come into school.

A Message from Mrs Harrison, Yr11 HOY

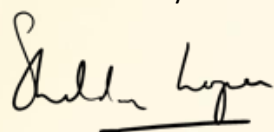
As HOY 11, I would like to congratulate our students for their hard work and dedication over the Autumn term. I am looking forward to a productive Spring term, with all our students focusing on preparing for their GCSE examinations. I know that they can all achieve well. I am always available to speak to both the students and parents to address any issues that may arise over the next few months.

Finally...

My staff and I are focused on ensuring that your child achieves their potential this summer. In fact, I can say that the St Damian's staff genuinely love your children and want them to succeed. Last year we had the best progress outcomes in our history. This didn't happen by chance, but through hard work and commitment from both students and staff. This meant that the vast majority of our students achieved their potential and used their grades to get on the courses 'of their choice' which is very important. Today, I delivered an assembly that I hope changed their mind-sets towards believing in themselves and to aim for high aspirations for their futures. All of them deserve the best start in life and the next few months we will do everything we can to ensure that this happens. I ask parents to support our endeavours by supporting your child at home.

As always, thanks for your support.

Yours sincerely



Mr Logue
Headteacher