



PARMITER'S SCHOOL

FOUNDED 1681

Headmaster: Mr M Jones BA MEd

13 July 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we near the end of this academic year, I thought it helpful to provide some information regarding our curriculum provision for next year. This year has been like no other and our planning for September reflects this. There is much to share with you regarding logistics and protocols for September and I will do this in due course. Here I will only say that we are planning for a full return for all students in September. However, should government advice change, we have contingency plans for a partial closure that will enable all students to access a blend of face to face and remote learning.

The information below focuses on our key priorities of:

- Supporting students to re-engage with learning in a school environment;
- Maintaining a curriculum that allows students to develop a broad knowledge and range of skills;
- Ensuring no student is disadvantaged by their experience of remote learning and any gaps in knowledge or skills or any misconceptions are addressed;
- Students in Year 11 and Year 13 are fully prepared for their GCSE and A Level examinations in Summer 2021.

Supporting students to re-engage with learning in a school environment

I know that the vast majority of our students have continued to engage in their learning whilst at home. In fact, some students have thrived and embraced the flexibility and independence of home learning. In many cases, 're-engagement' will be about students readapting to the routines of the school day and the new protocols and logistics that will be necessary on the school site in September. Where students do need more support re-engaging with learning, help will be personalised and coordinated by our excellent key stage leaders, Mr Cummings and Ms Hall, and our Heads of Sixth Form, Mr Porter and Mrs Rowland. All students will, however, experience a start to the year that differs from the normal September routines (if they can remember them!). The first two full days of school, Thursday 3 September and Friday 4 September will include more time with form tutors focusing on the transition back to school.

Curriculum & learning

We are committed to all Parmiter's students studying a broad curriculum. Narrowing our focus to English, Maths and Science will not allow our students to thrive.

Having the opportunity to study a wide range of subjects is crucial in developing a breadth of knowledge, a range of skills and allowing students the opportunity to explore where their future interests and passions may lie. It is also true that the curriculum in many subjects supports the development of literacy and numeracy skills; these do not need to be exclusively taught through English and Maths lessons.

At Parmiter's, we pride ourselves on having subject specialists in all areas of our curriculum. Our teachers are passionate about their subject. They are also experts and this breadth of subject and pedagogical knowledge means they deliver learning that is interesting, coherent, has context, addresses key misconceptions and misunderstandings, can respond to student interests and queries, and much more. Allowing my expert staff to deliver their subjects and teach skills and knowledge that, in many cases, are transferable to other curriculum areas is key in allowing students to thrive.

As I mentioned in a previous email, I have met with every one of my subject leaders regarding the curriculum for September. My subject leaders have interrogated their schemes of work and carefully thought about the topics students will study when they first return to full-time school in September. They have reflected on the key concepts, skills and knowledge needed in order to allow students to progress in their subject, both in the short and long term. Teachers will be ensuring students are secure in these key areas. This does **not** mean students will be formally tested on return, but that teachers will be assessing on an on-going basis in lessons and adapting teaching and support as needed.

In some subjects, students are taught in groups other than their form groups. Where these groupings are organised by ability, departments will be reviewing groups more regularly than in previous years. We ask that you respect the judgement of our teachers and subject leaders who have placed your child in the group they think most appropriate for September. If this is wrong, and your child would benefit from more support or challenge, the relevant department(s) will be in touch to discuss a change of group. I politely ask that you respect the professional judgement of my staff and trust us to recognise when a change of group would be in a student's best interest.

Preparing Year 11 & 13 students for GCSE and A Level examinations in Summer 2021

I am sure you will have read press reports of schools reducing the number of GCSE courses students are studying. In my view this is neither desirable nor necessary. Our students have access to expert teachers led by skilled subject leaders who have planned in detail for September. Any gaps in learning will be addressed, lessons will focus on key skills and concepts, and students in Year 11 and 13 will be well-prepared for their GCSE and A Level examinations in Summer 2021.

Students who will be taking public examinations next summer, and their parents/carers, may be interested in reading and responding to the current Ofqual consultation on 'proposed changes to the assessment of GCSEs, AS and A Levels in 2021'. This can be accessed from this link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposed-changes-to-the-assessment-of-gcse-as-and-a-levels-in-2021>

Whilst I have every confidence that our students will be fully prepared for their examinations in Summer 2021, we have put in place some **timetable changes for 2020-21** to further support students. In summary, these are:

- Year 11 students will have 8 English lessons per fortnight (as opposed to 7 lessons in previous years). All students take two GCSEs in English, English Language and English Literature, and so the additional lesson will support students in maximising their grades in both qualifications.
- There is an additional teaching set in Year 11 Science. This will allow students to be taught in smaller teaching groups in this subject area where they will be awarded either two or three GCSEs, depending on whether they are studying the Combined/Double Science or Triple Science courses.
- Students in Year 13 will have an additional lesson per fortnight for each of their subjects, and so have 10 timetabled lessons per fortnight. The only subjects where this differs is Further Maths (15 hours per fortnight due to the two A Level qualifications) and Economics. In Economics, staffing restrictions mean students will have 9 lessons per fortnight but the department will be offering small group tutorials at key points in the year to support student progress.

I am extremely grateful for everything you have done to support your children during this period of home learning. I know I speak for the entire staff body when I say that we are very much looking forward to welcoming the students back into our classrooms, workshops, laboratories and studios in September.

Yours sincerely



M Jones
Headmaster