

4 September 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Academic Matters – the first two weeks of Michaelmas Term

I hope that your child is looking forward to coming back into lessons from Monday next week. For many students, this return might mark the first time they have learnt from teachers in person, in a classroom, for many months. Our teachers have been planning this week to ensure we can spend the first two weeks of term consolidating learning from the lockdown period, which will include going back over key content where necessary. I hope that this purposeful approach will help students feel confident with their academic journey ahead this year, as they re-engage with classroom learning.

With this in mind, please may I update you on the following academic matters that will be in place for the start of term.

Homework

All students in Years 7–9 will receive a homework timetable. However, in order to assist students to re-engage with this important routine of learning, for the first two weeks of term all homework will be based on consolidation of learning from last year, and will be optional for students to complete. All optional consolidation homework tasks will be set on Firefly, our Virtual Learning Platform, with its completion rewarded by teachers.

Students in Years 10–11 will receive a homework timetable. Their homework will also be focused on consolidation for the first two weeks of term, but will be compulsory for them to complete, in order to ensure they hit the ground running for their GCSE courses and that students feel confident for the year ahead. Teachers will check that this consolidation is being completed, and it will be set as usual on Firefly.

Sixth Form students are set homework by their subject teachers across their A-Level subjects, and in line with Years 10–11, homework will be focused on consolidation for the first two weeks of term. As usual, all Sixth Form homework learning is set on Firefly.

The Forder Co-Curricular Programme

We are preparing a fantastic Forder programme for our students to enjoy, following our COVID-secure guidelines. In order to support students with the transition back into school-based learning, we will launch the Forder Co-Curricular Programme from 21 September, Week 3 of term. In its place for the first fortnight will be extended times with form tutors and other activities to support students readjust to life at St Dunstan's in person, as we are aware that for some students this support will be an important foundation for the year ahead.

Classroom Learning

All subjects that require specialist facilities (such as the Sciences, Art, Design Engineering, etc.) are timetabled to occur in those laboratories, studios, or workshops. For subjects which do not require as much specialist equipment (such as English, History, RPE), we have endeavoured to timetable lessons so that groups stay in the same classroom as much as possible, with teachers moving between them.

I do hope that your child is excited at the start of a new term; our teachers are certainly looking forward to welcoming them back into St Dunstan's for a year of exciting lessons and engaging learning activities.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Holmes', written over a horizontal line.

Jonathan Holmes
Deputy Head Academic