



HITCHIN GIRLS' SCHOOL

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Ref: 114

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Year 11 - Steps to Success and Passport to Prom

Apologies for what is a lengthy email! There is a lot of important information to share. For ease, please find the contents here for reference:

- **Steps to Success Programme for Year 11**
- **Revision support and guidance - for your child and how you can support them**
- **Mocks**
- **Passport to Prom - how your child can earn their place at Prom in the Summer**
- **Supporting Year 11 during the weeks ahead**

The key messages will also be available via our Steps to Success website which will launch next week; this will contain videos to watch if you'd prefer to watch than read!

Dear Parent/Carer,

We have welcomed 2024 with renewed energy and a strong focus on the busy half term ahead with the GCSE learning that every student needs to be undertaking, reviewing, revising and consolidating ahead of their exams in 15 weeks' time.

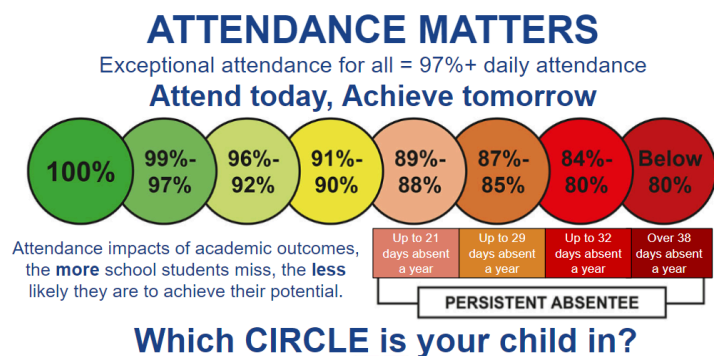
This term is critical for our Year 11 cohort. If they are to reach and hopefully exceed their potential this Summer then, as explained in assembly on Friday, their priorities must be:

- attending school every day
- absolute effort and focus in every lesson
- attending the extensive range of revision sessions being provided by their subjects
- maintaining and balancing their involvement in their chosen enrichment activities and hobbies
- completing all set homework and actively engaging and acting on the feedback provided to consolidate their learning
- ensuring that they have a well established revision plan that they are actively using and sticking to every week!
- recognising which revision techniques and activities work for them, using them daily so that they become good habits and, therefore, being productive and smart with their available time



Attendance

Sadly, nationally and locally, Year 11 attendance is lower than that of their younger peers. We know from the work Mrs Cole and the attendance team shared with us at the start of the school year, that **every lesson missed has a direct impact on gaps in student knowledge, and filling those gaps retrospectively isn't always easy.**



90% attendance over 5 years = half a year of schooling missed.

80% attendance over 5 years = a whole year missed.

We appreciate all the efforts from parents/carers who support excellent attendance and thank you for everything you are already doing. Of course, we are at the time of year where colds and viruses are rife; we encourage all students to attend school unless doing so would cause their condition to worsen significantly. For those whose ongoing medical needs require alternative support, we stress the need for students to engage with this on a regular basis to ensure consistency.

National research, and our own analysis, both point to the fact that the most significant factor that will impact on your child's results this Summer is their attendance. *Please work with us to ensure that they are in every day unless it is absolutely necessary for them to be absent or if they are following an alternative curriculum arrangement agreed with Mrs Cole.*

Mocks

Year 11 conducted themselves very well during their mocks and we are proud of their commitment, preparation and attitude to learning during what was a busy and tiring fortnight.

Our next Mock Exams run from 27 February - 1 March. They will receive their timetables shortly; whilst there will not be a mock in every subject they can expect a minimum of one in English Language and Maths. It is crucial that students attend every exam in order to develop their experience of exam conditions and increase their exam and silence stamina ahead of the Summer.

Steps to Success Programme

Having explained everything on offer through our Steps to Success programme in assembly on Friday it was exciting to start this morning with a session where we looked at revision timetables and calendars. All students should be working on these between now and Friday.

We have made our expectations clear to the students: that every student is expected to fully engage with and utilise the huge range of support on offer over the coming weeks. This will include:

- ★ Our **Steps to Success tutor time sessions** which will be delivered by Mrs Cooper via Google Classroom and videos. Each Steps to Success session will look at how our brains work and therefore what we need to do to best help them learn, embed and be able to retrieve information in the forthcoming exams and beyond. Each session will also look at a different revision technique/strategy which will be explained/demonstrated before students are given time to immediately begin to put them into practice. All of the relevant resources will be provided and students will be given time in tutor time to apply what they learn. It is vital that they then continue to use them and work on the various strategies during their own study time *so that they turn concepts into established learning patterns/habits*.
- ★ **Learning Performance 'How to Revise' workshops - coming soon!** These will be 1 hour sessions delivered by the brilliant [Learning Performance Team](#). The workshop will focus on how to revise, how their brain works and how to, therefore, maximise their capacity to retain and use knowledge and skills in their upcoming exams. These will be hands-on, practical sessions and promise to be an exciting and important experience.
- ★ **Weekly subject revision sessions - please see full timetable**
 - These sessions are *open to all* but teachers will email requesting that your child attends a session if deemed necessary based on their current attainment in that subject/teacher recommendation. Students will be expected to attend. *Failure to do so will impact their Passport to Prom (details below). Parents/carers will be emailed if a student misses a session so that you are aware.*
 - Sessions run either at lunch time or after school, starting next week and running right up to when the exam happens in each subject.
 - If your child has a clash between subjects on the same day then they will be advised to alternate weeks between each subject.
 - It is worth noting that students who don't already have an extra curricular club at lunch time have 5 hours of their school week that they are currently using to eat their lunch and socialise. Whilst, of course, this is a vital part of their day, is important for their well being and they need some downtime during the school day, a happy balance can and should be reached. Our advice is that some of these 5 hours must be directed towards attending revision sessions rather than just chatting with friends. *The message we gave to Year 11 on Friday was - go with your friends to a revision session and learn together! Students who spend all 5 hours of lunchtime each week purely socialising are missing out on vital opportunities which could negatively impact on their success this Summer.*
 - For each subject for which they attend a revision session, students have the opportunity to benefit from approximately 15 additional hours of specialist teaching (on top of their usual lessons) and support between now and when they go on study leave! Evidence shows that last year those Year 11s who attended these sessions achieved higher grades than they were on track to achieve before they attended the sessions; our motto, therefore, is ***'attend today, achieve tomorrow'***.
 - To reward students for commitment to their revision, next week they will be issued with a **Revision Session stamp card**. Much like a coffee stamp card, every time they attend a revision session their teacher will sign and date it. When they have completed a card, they are invited to go and redeem it for a free hot drink at Morbeans coffee shop (usually only available to Sixth Form, staff and

Celebration Assembly award winners). This scheme proved highly successful last year, being both a good incentive/motivator and a nice treat that many saved to use after they had completed a GCSE exam.

→ We would ask that all parents and carers encourage, support and enable their child to attend these sessions - you may even wish to use attendance at these sessions as part of any home reward systems you have in place for your child.

★ **CPG How to Revise Guides** - all students were given these free of charge in October along with a video by Mrs Cooper explaining how best to use them. Many have told us how useful they are and how they used them in the lead up to the Mock Exams. If your child has not yet shown you it, or explained to you how they are using it, please encourage them to do so; it is really worth parents/carers being familiar with this and talking it through with your child. One of the best ways to embed learning is for students to teach others, so be prepared to become the student when they need to use this high level thinking strategy!

★ Further advice and guidance on how best to revise can be found on our **Steps to Success Revision Support website** which will launch next week after our first Steps to Success sessions. It also includes our 'top tips for students and parents' from our current Year 13 students and their families. Definitely worth a read!

★ **Revision Timetables** - students should all have these in place and be using them every week. We will be revisiting them in our Steps to Success sessions next Tuesday in tutor time. We advise them to have a printed copy up in their study space at home, on the fridge or family noticeboard and in their lockers so that they see it throughout their day. Families need to be aware of their revision plans so that they can take it into account when making family plans over the coming weeks and months. *If you have any concerns regarding your child's revision at home please do not hesitate to contact their tutor in the first instance.*

Passport to Prom - EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

The Prom is a highlight of Year 11 for our students and an important rite of passage for those wishing to attend. Along with Founder's Day, it is a wonderful celebration of the end of the student's compulsory secondary education and we very much look forward to celebrating all of their hard work and achievements with them on *Tuesday, 9 July at Offley Place*.

On Friday we also launched our *Passport to Prom* with Year 11 - they will receive their Prom Passports next week. The passport is designed to help students focus their efforts in the final run up to the GCSE exams. *There is no automatic right to attend Prom and students must complete their passport to be eligible to attend.*

As stated in our Behaviour for Learning Policy:

Students will be expected to take responsibility for their own behaviour and meet the required behaviour expectations at all times.

In addition to the sanctions already listed, the following may also be used:

Removal of a student privilege

*This includes, but is not limited to, Trips; Whole School or Year group events e.g. Carol Service, Sports Day or Founders Day; House event or Celebration; **Prom (Y11 only)**; Access to an area of the school e.g. tutor room. (HGS BfL Policy 2023/24)*

Students are required to achieve all of the following milestones if they are to be eligible to attend Prom:

- Complete *at least 1 Revision Session Stamp Card*, ie you attend at least *8 Revision Sessions between now and the start of study leave in May* and ALL that you are notified by your teacher that you MUST attend - failure to do so will mean that you will jeopardise your eligibility to attend Prom
- Meet NEA and other course deadlines
- Meet our attendance expectations and have your best possible attendance between now and May; avoiding any unauthorised absences
- Be on time to school, attend tutor time and be punctual to lessons
- Your Behaviour for Learning record must reflect a positive engagement with learning, our school values and our Charter of Kindness and Respect
- Following our BfL policy from today any students who receive a C5 will not be allowed to attend Prom. Should a C5 be issued after a Prom ticket has been purchased, the student will no longer be allowed to attend and will not receive a refund
- As the oldest students in uniform, you are expected to be positive role models to younger students at all times and positively represent the school
- You must return all required textbooks, library books and school equipment by the end of the day of the last exam in that subject (if not before)

You will shortly receive an Expression of Interest form for the Prom. Tickets will then go on sale after the next Mock window closes on 1 March.

Health and Wellbeing

The health and wellbeing of all our Year 11 students as they head towards their GCSEs remains our utmost priority. Our tutor programme, Headstrong takeovers, Pastoral and Learning Support Team are all providing opportunities, advice, support and insight into how to develop and maintain resilience during what will inevitably be a busy time.

By being mindful of the following, students can ensure that they are in the best possible position to preparing for and sitting exams:

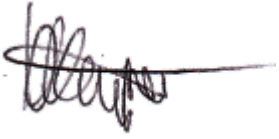
- **Connect the jigsaw pieces** (attendance, lessons/learning, homework/revision and well being) - it is only when all 4 of these work together that a student can succeed.
- **Balance** – study and social time, students must find the happy medium for both.
- **Health** – get enough sleep, eat well, stay hydrated and exercise.
- **Support** – ask for help - you are not alone and we are in this with you!

And finally.... There are ONLY 15 weeks until the first GCSE exam. By working together we can ensure all students maximise their potential and make the best progress possible - *little and often needs to be our shared mantra* and is the best possible way to ensure that stress does not creep in. Please help us to help your child to achieve or

hopefully exceed their potential this Summer by supporting them at home, and supporting us in what we are offering them.

Your support, as always, is greatly appreciated and we look forward to working together to support our Year 11 cohort over the coming months before we celebrate with them at Founders' Day on Friday, 28 June, Prom on 9 July and Results Day on Thursday, 22 August.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Charlotte Gunns', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Charlotte Gunns

Mrs R Cooper
Assistant Head - Raising Attainment

Ms C Gunns
Head of Year 11