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Dear Parents

Schemes of Work and GCSE Reform

As you are aware, school closed early yesterday to allow members of staff to devote time to revise schemes of work in order to meet new curriculum requirements and changes to examinations. Significant educational reforms introduced by the government will impact significantly on all young people of school age.

I have summarised some of the main changes for GCSEs below:

- Pupils now in Year 10 will be the last group to take the current GCSEs in English, English Language and Mathematics before sweeping GCSE reforms are introduced.
- Pupils now in Year 9 will be the first to sit new GCSEs in English and Mathematics.
- Pupils now in Year 8 will be assessed under a new GCSE structure in subjects including English, Mathematics, Religious Studies, Science, History, Geography, Spanish and French (where this option is taken).
- A new grading system will be introduced in English and Mathematics from 2017 onwards and in other subjects (including Religious Studies, Science, History, Geography and Spanish) from 2018 onwards. Further subjects will be reformed in subsequent years.
- Pupils will be awarded a grade from 9 to 1, with 9 being the highest. Grade U will be awarded where performance is below the minimum required to pass the GCSE.
- New GCSEs will not be divided into modules, and there will be little or no coursework. This is to avoid the disruption to teaching and learning through repeated assessment, to allow pupils to demonstrate the full breadth of their abilities in the subject, and to allow standards to be set fairly and consistently. This means that the assessment of nearly all pupils will take place at the end of courses in Year 11.
- Tiered papers which cater for pupils of different abilities, currently taken by pupils in a number of subjects, will be used only where an examination paper does not allow pupils at the lower end of the ability range to demonstrate their knowledge and skills, or will not stretch the most able.
- Taking a GCSE examination before the summer of Year 11 will be rare. GCSE examinations will be available only in the summer series of examinations, apart from a November re-sit series for English Language and Mathematics. This series is aimed at students who are at least 16 years of age and who are re-sitting papers previously taken.

Further details of the above reforms are available on the Ofqual website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/reform-of-gcse-qualifications-by-ofqual>

and on the Department for Education website

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/get-the-facts-gcse-and-a-level-reform>

Although much remains to be done, please be assured that the time gained yesterday afternoon was used wisely. Thank you to all parents for supporting the school in addressing this initiative.



Dress for Success



We are heartened by the response of parents and pupils to the new school uniform. Many of our current pupils have expressed an intention to wear the new uniform next term. It will become compulsory for new Year 7 pupils arriving in September 2015. Pupils currently in Years 7 and 8 must wear the new school uniform by September 2016. Pupils currently in Year 9 have the option of wearing the new school uniform should they choose, but this is not a requirement. Year 9 pupils must, however, buy and wear the new school tie (priced £4.99) by September 2016.

This week any pupil wearing incorrect uniform has been issued with an Inappropriate Uniform Card. This card highlights the item of uniform that does not meet with school policy. Parents are asked to sign and return the card to school the day after its receipt with a commitment to address the aspect of uniform identified, as soon as possible and no later than the start of the new academic year. All details are available in the *Dress for Success* booklet on the school's website.

New school uniform (burgundy blazer, plaid school skirt, school tie and PE kit) is available from APC school outfitters. APC's school uniform shop is based in Tadcaster. Orders may be made online. APC will be in school for purchases of uniform on Tuesday 23 June from 5.30pm to 6.45pm, Tuesday 7 July from 5.30pm to 7.00pm and Monday 20 July from 1.30pm to 3.30pm.

Inspired Design

As our current Year 11 pupils are nearing the end of this season's GCSE papers, I would like to share an interesting example of the varied work that is presented for assessment to examiners.

Oliver Stapleton (Year 11), used *Sketch Up* and other software to design a toy for children aged five to seven years, as part of his *GCSE Resistant Materials* final project. He then printed a miniature three-dimensional model of the design before making the product. This was hand-crafted to meet the demands of the brief. His design includes many intricate details such as a mechanism that allows the propeller to rotate as the wheels move. He took his inspiration from the film *Stuart Little*!

Yours sincerely



E A Cox, Headteacher

