



16th October 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

It has been a pleasure to welcome back your son/daughter to Maidenhill in Year 11. As a year group, the vast majority have made a good start with record breaking attendance to both school and our recently re-opened after school Study Zone. Most have settled well; are demonstrating a 'can do' attitude; and are eager to get going.

You may have heard earlier in the week that the Government have announced that current Year 11 students WILL sit their GCSE exams as planned in the summer. It is likely that the GCSE exams will start a little later than normal during the week beginning Monday 7th June. However we understand that there may well be an English and maths GCSE exam before that.

We are fully committed to supporting your son/daughter during the forthcoming year and to ensuring they are as well prepared as they possibly can be. Teachers are carefully considering their curriculum plans for the year and how to catch up what has been missed. We are also considering how best to plug other gaps resulting from the national lockdown, not least to consider the lack of Year 10 mock exams that would have taken place at the end of last academic year. It is at this time therefore that I ask for your continued support and to work with us in the coming days. Overleaf I have outlined some key points for your consideration and would ask that you discuss these with your son/daughter in the days ahead. Now is the time to further extend good habits, throw out bad ones and make a change for the better.

To kick start this process, I today delivered an assembly outlining our plans for this side of the Christmas break and I am delighted to say that we are able to offer students an Independent Study Day during the upcoming October break on Tuesday 27th October 2020. On this day, students will enter a period labelled the '40 Day Plan'. This day will mark the countdown of 40 days until their first mock exam on Tuesday 1st December. During this 40 day period, there will be study and revision skills sessions as well as sessions related to students' Post 16 choices delivered during tutor time. Students will be expected to complete at least 90 minutes of additional work per day as they learn to revise and prepare for a period of examinations. Students will receive their mock result grades on Tuesday 12th January. I cannot stress enough just how important these grades may prove to be. In the summer just gone, they were the starting point for deciding Centre Assessed Grades for our outgoing Year 11 students. They may yet need to be used in a similar way in the event of national exams not being able to be sat.

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Regarding our October study day, students should arrive from 9:30am for 'tea, hot chocolate and a snack'. Our first study session will start promptly at 10:00am and last until midday. We will break for lunch for 30 minutes, before commencing a second study session from 12:30pm until 2:30pm. Students may attend either the morning or afternoon session, or both. On this day, students will participate in independent study and revision. They will have access to computers to be able to make use of GCSE Pod and other online resources. They will also receive an A4 revision folder complete with blank flashcards, file dividers and highlighter pens to help them organise their revision materials. They will have no access to the rest of the school and so they should bring all other revision materials with them; this may include revision guides and past papers. Students will need to bring a packed lunch for the day. Students may of course wear casual clothes, but otherwise full school rules will apply during these sessions, including the use of mobile phones and other digital devices.

On the next page, please take note of some key forthcoming dates. Please return the reply slip below to Mr Hunter by Thursday 22nd October.

Yours sincerely,



Mr A Hunter
Deputy Head Teacher
Maidenhill School

Year 11 Study Day

To be returned to Mr Hunter no later than Thursday 22nd October

I give permission for my son/daughter:

Of Tutor Group: to participate in the study day on Tuesday 27th October.

He/she will attend:

Morning Session

Afternoon Session

Both Sessions.

(Please circle as appropriate)

Signed:

Date:

Key Dates:

- **Half Term** - Monday 26th October
- **October break Study Day and 40 Day Plan for core mocks starts** - Tuesday 27th October
- **Start of Term 2 and Study/Revision Skills Sessions start** - Monday 2nd November
- **Review Point 1** - Monday 9th November
- **Mock Exams** - Tuesday 1st December
- **End of Term 2** - Friday 18th December
- **Mock Results Day** - Tuesday 12th January

Parents and carers make a significant difference to a student's success in GCSEs. They can support by:

- **Ensuring students attend well.** Previous students with above 94% attendance secured a third of a grade higher than expected, whilst students who had below 90% attendance achieved half a grade lower!
- **Establishing good home routines.** Work out an evening and weekend timetable to provide a good balance of work and social time. Provide a quiet working space, FREE FROM DISTRACTIONS including mobile phones and other digital devices. Provide the right equipment e.g. calculator, ruler, protractor etc. Ensure a reasonable bed time with their mobile digital devices in another room.
- **Making time for at least 90 minutes of Independent Study per day.** This may include regular class Independent Study, but MUST also involve revising through taking notes; using online resources including GCSE Pod/BBC Bitesize/SENECA; making flash cards/mind maps; and practising past paper questions. Testing knowledge is crucial to effective revision; students need to know what they know and what they don't know, then do something about it!
- **Keep talking positively.** Students will find it helpful to talk about how they're feeling about their exams. They may be nervous, but they need to understand that it's natural to feel that way. Help them be resilient by listening, gently encouraging and showing an interest in their learning and what they're experiencing.