



25<sup>th</sup> October 2012

Dear Parent/Carer

I am writing to you as Half Term approaches, to give you a flavour of the Action Plan we have developed to support Year 11 students to fulfil their potential in the forthcoming GCSE examinations. I also wish to point out some of the practical steps you can take to support your son or daughter as they enter upon the most important year of their school life to date.

We have identified a wide range of actions that we will take as a school to ensure that your child is supported and challenged throughout the year. Here are just a few of them;

- **Mock Examinations** – your child has been given a booklet with the timetable for Mock Examinations (which run from 12-23 November), and a brief guide to revision topics and sources of information from each department. Please ensure that they have read this through, and that your son or daughter has developed a revision timetable in preparation for the examinations. We are holding a mock results day on 30 November, when your son or daughter will receive their results on an official print out and sealed in an envelope (just like the real thing!). Mock Examinations are a vital part of preparation for ‘real’ exams, as they provide an indicator for students of their current strengths and particular areas that will need more work.
- **Revision** – clearly this is critical if your child is to reach their potential. You can support them by ensuring they have a good space for revision, are sticking to their timetable, achieve a good balance between revision and other activities, and that they have a plentiful supply of nutritious snacks, water and fresh air! In the run up to mocks (and the real thing next Summer), they should aim to spend *at least* 2 hours per night on revision, and during half term they will clearly spend much more than this on their work each day. It is vital that they take regular, short breaks, and that they do not spend long periods of time on one subject alone – it is preferable for them to spend a shorter period of time (say 30 minutes) on one subject, and then move on to another. They should always make notes as they revise. If you ask them to teach you what they have just been revising, this will help them remember the information better.
- **SAM Learning** – this is an online revision tool, with thousands of resources, questions, practice examples and other great revision aids in the vast majority of GCSE subjects. All students at Hinchingsbrooke have access to this, 24 hours a day 7 days a week. Your son or daughter has their own unique log in. With as little as 10 hours use, students nationally have gained on average 12.3 points overall in their final results (equivalent to 2 GCSE grades higher – over all of their results). See [www.samlearning.com](http://www.samlearning.com) for further details.
- **Reach for the Stars** – later this term, we will begin a series of workshops designed to help students who have the potential to gain A and A\* grades in their subjects. These will focus on techniques students can use in their answers to secure the top grades, and will provide a wealth of hints and tips from across the subjects. Further details will be available after half term.
- **Target grades** – Every student has target grades to aspire to in each of their subjects. Do you know what your son or daughter’s targets are? Please check this with them, and ask them what they need to do to achieve their targets in each subject. If you (or they) are unsure of their targets, please contact their tutor in the first instance. They will be more than happy to provide this information.

- **Year 11 reports** – students will bring these home on 20 December. Please read these through carefully with your son or daughter and ensure that you have highlighted the key points and any questions you wish to ask teaching staff at the Parents' Evening. Reports will contain mock, predicted and target grades, as well as detailed feedback on current performance in each subject.
- **Parents' Evening** – takes place on Tuesday 8 January. It is an ideal opportunity to gather a range of information and advice; what your son or daughter needs to do to improve in each subject, what extra support is available, how you can best support their revision and learning at home.
- **Summer Exam season** - exams begin in earnest on 14 May. During the exam season we will be running breakfast revision sessions, master classes, last minute boosters, SAM Learning lunches and a host of other activities to support preparation and boost revision.

Here are some more important dates for your diary;

**8 November** – Maths module 2 (part of the Maths GCSE – a 'real' exam, worth one third of the final mark).

**9 January 2013** – Biology B1 Module (first time around for double groups, retake opportunity for the rest)

**10 January** - English GCSE Module 2 *The Writer's Craft* (also a 'real' exam for those students taking the GCSE in English (not English Language), worth 40% of the final mark).

**14 January** – Physics P1 Module retake

**17 January** – Chemistry C1 Module retake

**17 January** – Geoff Hannan, educational consultant and well-known speaker on outstanding learning and achievement, will speak to Year 11 parents on how they can best support their child. This talk will take place in the PAC, on the evening of the 17<sup>th</sup>.

**8-10 April** – Easter Revision School. Sessions will be taking place in a full range of subjects over these three days, led by teaching staff from Hinchingsbrooke. The aim is to support the revision your son or daughter is doing at home during this critical period in the run up to the exam season.

There are a number of other interventions taking place, about which you will receive information as it becomes available.

Don't forget that your child's tutor and subject teachers are always happy to help and offer advice during the year. Heads of Department and Jackie Hodgson (Key Stage 4 Manager) are also excellent sources of further information and guidance. I am also very happy for you to contact me if you wish to discuss any aspect of our support for year 11 during the coming months.

After half term, there will be just over 100 teaching days left until the Summer exams begin. I look forward to working with you to help all of our Year 11 students achieve their very best during the coming days and months.

Yours sincerely,

Lee Walker  
Vice Principal