

8th September 2020

Dear Year 8 parents and carers.

At this stage in the term, it would be timely to provide some reminders and guidance regarding homework and independent learning in year 8. Please take the time to read the following:

The approach to Independent Learning in Year 8

As was the case in Year 7, Year 8 students are not formally set weekly homework tasks to be taken in by the class teacher. We have not seen a net benefit to this approach for year 8 in the past, and have found that it detracts from our core purpose of maintaining enthusiasm for learning and pride in independently completed work. Instead, as was the case in Year 7, they will be given opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills in a series of engaging cross-curricular projects.

The two main elements of Independent Learning in Year 8 are:

- 1. A termly cross-curricular project.**
- 2. Subject-specific Independent Learning Booklets (ILBs).**

Termly projects (Cross-curricular)

Students in year 8 will be set a project each term, which consolidates and extends the knowledge and skills that they have acquired in their academic subjects, as well as allowing them to explore issues that are important to them personally. The first term's project for year 8 is the **Mission to Mars** project, which focuses on extending the knowledge and skills acquired in English, Science, Geography, Religious Studies and Citizenship through a range of academic, practical and creative tasks.

The **Mission to Mars** brief has already been shared with students and can be found [here](#).

More information will follow in due course regarding Spring Term and Summer Term projects.

Independent Learning Booklets (ILBs)

Year 8 students also receive an Independent Learning Booklet (**ILB**) for each of their subject. This will be given to students to take home and work from, as well as an electronic copy being uploaded to Google Classroom. Students should be able to work through these booklets independently and track their own progress. Any queries regarding these booklets should be directed to the subject teacher or Head of Faculty. ILBs should contain the following:

- Key content for the course, arranged by topics, half termly or termly;
- Clear guidance on how to memorise, revise and practice effectively;
- Relevant reading that students can complete around the subject;

- Links to online resources with relevant passwords/ instructions (e.g. Seneca, Educake, Linguascope, Hegarty Maths);
- Opportunities for students to practise, test themselves and self-assess.

Monitoring

All tasks set to be completed outside of school are uploaded to **Google Classroom** and Show My Homework. We are currently phasing out Show My Homework in favour of Google Classroom so this is the primary platform to use. Students have been invited to join their Google Classroom by each of their teachers and it has been explained how they can receive assignments and upload work. Please click [here](#) for a reminder on how to do this.

Parents can monitor their child's tasks by being invited to join the Google Classroom by the class teacher. [Here](#) is a useful video that outlines Google Classroom for parents.

Expectations

We also expect students in year 8 to be reading for pleasure, and silent reading takes up a portion of form time. Please support us in encouraging your child to read, ideally by reading with them if possible.

We would expect a year 8 student to be spending around 45 minutes a week on each subject outside of school. Here are some ways in which you can support your child with independent learning at home:

- Discuss homework regularly with your child;
- Provide encouragement and support for your child when they take responsibility for organising themselves and putting in effort;
- Keep track of Google Classroom and the ILBs so you can support your child in becoming organised;
- Draw up a schedule with them to follow for independent learning (this will be an invaluable skill when they come to do their GCSEs);
- Establish a suitable place for them to study;
- If in doubt, ask! Contact the class teacher or Head of Faculty for advice.

Current expectations regarding possible school closure or self-isolation

Please be aware that, in the event of a school closure, remote learning will be a hybrid of live teaching and remote learning via Google Classroom. It is therefore vital that you are able to navigate the platform as soon as possible.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

Warm regards

Mr J O'Sullivan

Deputy Headteacher