Dear parents of years 7 and 8

Firstly, welcome back to year 8 parents and welcome to year 7 parents! I wish you every success in the upcoming academic year. I would like to draw your attention to some key changes to Homework and Independent Learning in years 7 and 8. As part of our ongoing review of the quality of education in Key Stage Three, this year will see the launch of a new Independent Learning and Homework programme. This, we feel, will better address the particular priorities of our Key Stage Three Students.

Here are the main changes you need to be aware of:
1. Weekly homework tasks in Years 7 and 8 will be replaced by termly cross-curricular projects. These will last around 6 weeks and will involve students applying a range of subject-specific knowledge and skills to a project brief that embodies an overarching curricular theme.
2. In Year 7, there will be no cross-curricular project set for the Autumn (first) term. This is to aid transition from primary school, settle students in and reduce unnecessary stress and anxiety caused by a ‘barrage’ of homework tasks from the outset. Students will, however, be working on their Ignite speeches which will involving them preparing and extended presentation on a topic of their choice in January as part of our oracy programme.
3. In addition to termly projects, each student in Years 7 and 8 will receive an Independent Learning Booklet for each subject. These will stay at home and will contain all the materials, support and guidance your child will need to learn independently. Whilst these are not marked as such, subject teachers will check the impact of these booklets through targeted in-class informal assessments. Tutors will also ask to see these booklets once per term in order to monitor how effectively they are being used by students. The Year 7 and 8 booklets for this academic year will be launched in the spring term (January).
4. Projects and booklets will be set in class and available via Show My Homework, our homework setting system. Year 7 students and parents will receive login guidance in due course. Please be assured that students in years 7 and 8 are still expected to be regularly reviewing and revising new work covered in class on a weekly basis. This is a crucial skill that they need to have mastered by the time they reach year 9, which is a key transition year in their journey to GCSEs and beyond.

We hope you will share our view that this approach to Independent Learning will be more successful in developing independence, curiosity, self-reliance and a positive attitude towards out-of-school learning. For more details on our Independent Learning Policy, please consult the school website under the Independent Learning and Homework tab. If you require any more information, or would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact the school. In due course, we will be announcing details regarding a parent after-school drop-in, focussing on how best we can work together to support your child in their Independent Learning.

Kind regards

Mr J. O’Sullivan
Assistant Head Teacher: lead on Independent Learning and Homework