

SOUTHEND HIGH SCHOOL FOR BOYS

ACADEMY GRAMMAR SCHOOL

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Headteacher: Robin M Bevan MA MEd PhD FRSA



20th July 2023

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope this email finds you well and that you are looking forward to the summer period whilst your son is on holiday. A restful break, filled with enjoyment and time to recharge batteries is essential to prepare for the beginning of Year 11 and GCSE examinations.

First of all, may I congratulate your son on his recent IAR Data in which he achieved the 52 points required to enter Sixth Form. To have made this standard at this stage of Year 10 is a fantastic achievement, and it shows he is successfully developing the knowledge and skills needed to fulfil his potential when we reach the examinations next year. He should have received some feedback on his Year 10 Exam performance in his subjects by now, giving him some areas in which he can improve. I also hope you've had the opportunity to sit down with him and discuss his report and look at ways to support him through his GCSE year, which can prove to be stressful for many of our young people.

Whilst this achievement is impressive, it must by no means cause complacency as there is still lots of work to be done before we reach the GCSE examinations. However, with six weeks off it can be easy to lose some of the hard-earned knowledge that has been acquired throughout this term. This can lead to starting Year 11 on the back foot, after having worked so hard to show their great potential at the end of Year 10.

To avoid this happening, I would strongly suggest dedicating some time to keeping some of this schoolwork fresh in the brain ahead of September. Whilst I am not suggesting your son spends huge swathes of the holiday working, allocating some time to recapping his Year 10 studies would be a sensible option throughout the summer to prepare him for the challenges of Year 11. Many of our successful students reach agreements with parents about some timetabled revision time which helps them on their way to success. Fortunately for our young people, technology has advanced so far which can actually make this process quite enjoyable compared to the days of old, which brings me to my next point around revision resources the school provides.

Online Resources

Effective learning comes in three parts, firstly covering or revising material and secondly, testing the understanding of the content covered and finally revisiting this at a later date. It is for this reason we have purchased subscriptions to two online resources to help our students attain highly at GCSE. It's vital students understand the sections of the process and the below is a guide to how these resources should be used, along with how to gain access.



GCSEPod

The best use of this software is for the learning and revision stage. Every GCSE subject is included, broken down into the smaller topics or 'pods' as per the specifications given by the exam boards. Each of these topics is then covered with instructional videos and written resources designed to teach the learner the content and skills necessary for the exam. Students should spend time going through each GCSE 'Pod' for each subject, recapping material they've covered in class. In order to access GCSEPod, follow the instructions below:

- Visit www.gcsepod.com and hit login in the top right corner
- On the left of the next page it says 'New to GCSEPod?', click 'Get Started' underneath
- Click 'Student' and fill in the details using your full name as registered with the school
- Start accessing the content!

Seneca Premium

This software is the most powerful assessment tool we have found, containing quizzes and rapid-fire testing on almost every facet of the GCSE curricula. Our previous students have always highly recommended this software so we have enabled access to the premium service for every child to help with their revision. Once a student has started using this software, they can then use it to go back after a certain period and revisit the content studied to ensure they remember it. If they find they are struggling, they should revert to GCSEPod for further instructional help. In order to access Seneca Premium, follow the instructions below:

- Visit www.senecalearning.com and hit 'Sign Up' in the top right corner
- Click 'Login with Microsoft' and use your school email address and password
- Start accessing the content!

If your son spends some time using these resources over the summer, I'm confident that come the first data collection in the new term, he will see the benefit and stand in good stead for the rest of Year 11. We will be working specifically on revision techniques during classes and tutor times, alongside some Evening Workshop provision for both students and parents to give you the tools to succeed next year.

Uniform

The only other point I would like to mention is uniform and, in particular, school shoes. Many of our students will purchase new shoes ahead of the new term which should conform to our school uniform code of 'plain black formal shoes'. Many retailers across the country are trying to sell black trainers under the guise of school shoes, with popular brands including Nike and Adidas designing shoes just for this purpose. These do not conform to our uniform regulations so please do not purchase them over the summer as they will not be permitted next term. I will also take this opportunity to remind our students that our school policy is that of no facial hair, and no hoodies or sweaters other than a plain black school jumper. My final reminder is that piercings are not to be worn within school at Key Stage 4.

Finally, I wish you and your son the very best summer imaginable, and I look forward to starting again in September for a successful Year 11.

Yours sincerely,



Mr Baines
Director of Key Stage 4
Southend High School for Boys