

30 September 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

Welcome to Key Stage 4

Beginning GCSE courses represents a key landmark in your child's secondary education. The transition from Key Stage 3 (Years 7, 8 & 9) to Key Stage 4 (Years 10 & 11) is a very important one, requiring changes of expectations for success to be established or maintained. Key Stage 4 will prepare students for GCSE exams at the end of Year 11 and will allow them to develop skills and knowledge that will be essential for future success at Sixth Form or College. Key Stage 4 will ensure that students are equipped with the necessary qualifications to follow their desired pathway and pursue their future career and interests with knowledge and opportunity.

What are the qualifications being completed?

GCSE stands for the General Certificate of Secondary Education which are graded on a scale of 9-1.

BTEC stands for Business & Technology Education Council and is a vocational qualification that is equivalent of a GCSE (Level 2 BTECs are graded Pass, Merit or Distinction', **NOT** grades 9-1 as with GCSEs).

A GCSE is a public examination that take place at the end of Year 11, usually during the months of May and June. This means that it is taken by students across the country on the same date and at the same time. They are a summary and assessment of what a student has learned and achieved during their time at school.

GCSE and BTEC courses will provide students with valuable qualifications that future education institutions and workplaces will consider prior to employment.

How can your child be a successful student?

In Key Stage 4, a student will need to take **increased responsibility** for their own learning. Often, teachers will use phrases such as 'independent learning' or 'independent task'. This will mean tasks need to be attempted alone, or find out/solve a problem independently, without the help of others. An example of independent learning would be completing homework to the best of a student's ability.

Having **excellent attendance** is crucial to the progress a student will make in their learning. It is vital to be in school and attending all lessons, on time, each day. Non-attendance can result in missing out on crucial knowledge and learning opportunities that cannot be recreated even through revision and independent study. This can be seen in the provision within lessons for scientific experiments, or the completion of practical activities in subjects such as Sport or Drama. Last year in Year 11:

- Students with at least 95% attendance achieved above 1 grade better on average in each subject; and
- Students with attendance lower than 80% achieved on average 2 grades below in each subject.

The best for everyone
The best from everyone
We have faith in our future

Positive attitude to learning is an important contributor to success at Key Stage 4. Put simply, the harder a student works, and the more motivated they are to produce their best work with best efforts, the more likely they are to make good progress and achieve the best results possible.

A positive attitude to learning also means a student is more likely to enjoy their lessons, and more likely to feel like they have done well. This in turn will make a student feel happier and more confident in themselves! Students who show excellent effort and motivations, contribute positively in lessons, and complete homework to the best of their ability experience greater success at the end of Year 11 than students who do not.

Being **organised** is VERY important. Students must ensure that they have the correct equipment, knowledge organiser and books each day for the lessons that they are timetabled. They will need to be organised and manage their time effectively to ensure that they are completing homework, revising regularly, and importantly, also making time for their own personal commitments such as hobbies and socialising with family and friends.

The expectations for **completing homework** are more challenging than Key Stage 3. Students will be expected to spend approximately 1 -2 hours on homework each day. This includes independent study or revision to consolidate what has been learned that day. Last year in Year 11:

- Students who attended above 50 hours of intervention sessions in Year 11 achieved nearly 2 grades higher on average in each subject; and
- Students who attended between 15 and 20 hours of intervention sessions in Year 11 achieved nearly 0.2 grades higher on average in each subject.

The more time is put in, the more progress will be made.

It is important all our students have **excellent behaviour and conduct** as what students do and how they behave reflects on the whole of our school. We expect our students to be outstanding role models to other students, their peers and in the community.

Key assessment dates this term

| Subject | Week beginning | Detail |
|---------|--------------------------------|--|
| Spanish | 10 th October 2022 | Writing assessment (friends and family) |
| Spanish | 21 st November 2022 | Speaking assessment (local area) |
| English | 10 th October 2022 | An Inspector Calls writing assessment |
| Science | 17 th October 2022 | Summative assessment |
| RS | 17 th October 2022 | Christianity and Islam, Issues of human rights and Islamic beliefs and practices |
| Maths | 10 th October 2022 | Foundation – Angles Assessment Higher – Graphs Assessment |

Key Stage 4 is a chance for new beginnings and an opportunity to make a fresh start. It is the beginning of a new chapter for all students, so they need to make the most of it! We will support students to ensure they have the best Key Stage 4 journey and be fully prepared for the GCSE examinations all our students will complete. We ask that, as parents and carers, you support us in ensuring your child attends school on time every day, completes their homework and works

The best for everyone
The best from everyone
We have faith in our future

to the best of their ability each and every day. As an Academy, we'd like to thank you for your ongoing support and we look forward to continuing to work in partnership with you during the next two years.

If you have any questions then please contact Mr Ashton, Mr Whitehead or myself on the following email addresses or by phone on 0161 643 2643:

mashton@stannesacademy.org.uk

mwhitehead@stannesacademy.org.uk

rbox@stannesacademy.org.uk

Yours faithfully



R Box
Assistant Headteacher

The best for everyone
The best from everyone
We have faith in our future