

## PARENTS' HANDBOOK: ACADEMIC MATTERS

The common goal of all teachers here is to communicate effectively and encourage pupils to develop a commitment to learning for its own sake. Preparation for university and beyond is also seen as important, and each pupil is taught to develop a self-motivated attitude to study. Academic departments review their courses regularly to ensure that learning is a stimulating and interesting experience.

**In the Lower School** (Years 7 & 8) pupils study English, Mathematics, French, Latin, Geography, History, Religious Studies, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Drama, Information Technology, Art, Music, Design Technology/Electronics and Personal and Social Development (PSD).

It is the purpose of the **Middle School** curriculum to ensure that all pupils have a suitably wide range of options to choose from through the option blocks. The principle of breadth (guaranteed by the compulsory core of GCSE subjects) we see as important here as in the Upper School. Few pupils are able to map out their academic future with certainty in the pre-GCSE years, and an open mind towards the long-term future is recommended at this stage.

**Year 9 pupils** all follow courses in English, French, Latin, Mathematics, History, Geography, Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Religious Education. The majority will also take one further language chosen from German, Ancient Greek, Russian or Spanish. A range of creative and technological subjects is also studied. All pupils follow courses in Personal and Social Development, Information and Communication Technology, PE and Swimming.

Most subjects operate with mixed ability sets, with some reference to gender balance. Mathematics and Modern Languages do choose to set, though the composition of sets is constantly monitored and regularly reviewed. This principle of setting continues into GCSE.

**Year 10 and 11 pupils** follow a compulsory core to GCSE or IGCSE: Mathematics, English Language, English Literature, Biology, Chemistry and Physics, a modern foreign language and either History or Geography or Classical Civilisation. Most take one of the creative subjects as well. Additional optional subjects include History, Geography, Classical Civilisation, Drama, Music, Art, Design Technology, Information Technology, French, German, Latin, Spanish, Russian and Classical Greek. In addition pupils follow an International Studies course and a programme of careers guidance and work experience.

**In the Sixth Form** pupils follow the International Baccalaureate programme, which consists of six subject groups. Pupils choose three subjects at Higher Level and three at Standard Level:

1. Language A – (English) literature, including the study of selections from World Literature, or combined with Drama to form the 'Text and Performance' course, the latter available at Standard Level only.
2. Language B – Modern or classical language.
3. Individuals and Societies – History, Geography, Economics, Business and Management (Higher Level only), Philosophy, Psychology (Standard Level only), Information Technology in a Global Society (Standard Level only), Classical Civilisation (Standard Level only).
4. Experimental Sciences – Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Design Technology.

5. Mathematics – Mathematics Higher Level, Mathematics Standard Level, or Mathematic Studies at Standard Level.
6. Electives – Visual Arts, Music, Theatre Arts or a second subject from groups 2, 3 or 4.

In addition, all IB diploma students prepare an Extended Essay and undertake a course in Theory of Knowledge. A programme of Creativity, Action and Service (CAS) must also be completed. Pupils have a range of talks and interviews on university guidance; more detailed information is sent home prior to choices for GCSE and the Sixth Form.

### **Books**

Pupils obtain the vast majority of their books through loan arrangements with the academic departments. If a book is lost by the student, a replacement has to be ordered immediately and the cost is put on the school bill. Loaned books which are not returned as required by the Head of Department are chargeable at the full replacement cost. Books returned late will not be accepted back into stock, and credit will not be given.

### **Calculators**

Every pupil needs a suitable calculator for Mathematics. There are specific IGCSE/IB requirements and so we strongly recommend that new calculators are purchased from the school shop, which has negotiated favourable rates with the suppliers.

There are two calculators available at the school shop. There is a standard scientific calculator - the Casio fx-83 ES, which is useful from Year 7 up to and including IGCSE work in Year 11. This costs approximately £8.

The Ti-84+ calculator is compulsory for all IB Maths courses in Years 12 and 13, and many pupils find it helpful to have this calculator in Years 10 and 11 as well. This costs approximately £70. Written parental consent is required if a purchase is to be added to your school bill; a form is provided for your convenience, which your son/daughter should take to the school shop.

## Exchanges and visits

The School offers numerous visits and exchanges, during term time and holidays. Below is a list of trips run during 2008 – 2009 to give an indication; this list is regularly updated on the School website.

### October 2008

1 – 11 Y10 Málaga exchange (partners here)  
4 – 5 CCF RN Weekend Exercise Knole Park  
10 – 13 Shooting to Rotterdam  
11 – 21 Y10 Málaga Exchange  
12 – 19 Y10 Spanish Study trip to Santiago  
17 – 19 Y10 History visit to Battlefields  
18 – 26 Design Tech/Aikido/Japanese to Japan  
19 – 25 L6 Italian Study trip - Florence

### November 2008

4 - 17 Y12 Hamburg exchange (partners here)  
5 – 6 Y10 - L6 CCF Army Field Day - Lydd  
8 – 9 Sailing RYA Youth/Junior  
15 – 16 CCF RN Weekend Exercise Knole Park  
15 – 16 Sailing London Duck  
22 – 23 Sailing Oxford Magnum

### December 2008

5 – 7 PAMUN  
12 – 13 Y8 - Y11 Aachen Christmas Market  
17 – 22 L6 History to Germany  
17 – 21 Y9 Rugby tour to Biarritz  
17 – 21 Sennocke Consort trip to Belgium  
28 - 4 Jan Ski Club

### January 2009

21 – 28 L6th Brussels exchange (partners here)  
25 – 30 THIMUN  
28 - 4 Feb L6 Brussels exchange  
31 -13 Feb L6 Lyon Exchange (partners here)

### February 2009

11 – 18 L6 Science trip to AAAS, Chicago  
13 - 28 L6 Lyon Exchange  
13 - 16 L6 Econ & Bus Studies visit Belgium  
22 – 1 Mar Y10 & L6 Russian Exchange

### March 2009

6 - 8 Bath MUN  
10 – 17 Y10 & L6 Russian Exchange (partners here)  
14 – 15 CCF Army weekend exercise (Sussex)  
14 – 15 CCF RN Weekend exercise Knole Park

21 – 23 Bronze D of E practice  
22 - 4 Apr L6 Hamburg Exchange  
24 – 2 Apr Y9 Lyon Holiday exchange (partners here)  
25 - 31 Y10 Classics Pompeii trip  
26 - 5 Apr L6 Geography fieldtrip to Morocco  
26 – 6 Apr PROMO World India 1  
28 - 4 Apr L6 Ski holiday  
29 - 5 Apr L6 Salamanca Study Trip Group 1

### April 2009

4 - 12 Tennis Academy - Barcelona  
13 - 15 Silver D of E training  
15 - 27 Y10 Ibbenbüren Exchange (partners here)  
22 - 23 CCF Field Day & overnight exercises

### May 2009

1 - 4 Johnsons U6 revision weekend France  
16 - 27 Y9 Lyon term time exchange – 1<sup>st</sup> half  
21 - 27 L6 Latin & Classical Civ visit Rome  
HT tbc CCF RN Sea training (Upnor)  
HT tbc Gold D of E Assessed Expedition: Wales  
24 – 31 L6 Salamanca Study Trip Group 2  
27 – 8 Jun Y9 Lyon term time exchange - 2<sup>nd</sup> half

### June 2009

1 - 8 Y8 Pontoise Exchange (partners here)  
8 – 12 Y8 Study Trip to Normandy  
8 - 15 Y8 Pontoise Exchange  
14 - 16 Bronze D of E assessed expeditions  
20 Y7 Boulogne trip  
22 - 25 Silver D of E Expedition  
23 - 3 Jul PROMO Romania  
25 - 5 Jul PROMO India 2  
27 - 4 Jul Y10 Geography fieldtrip Cevennes  
28 - 4 Jul Y7 & Y8 Young Sox holiday in Greece  
28 – 4 Jul L6 English Reading week - Italy  
24 – 3 Jul Y9 Lyon Holiday exchange

### July 2009

2 - 16 Jul L6 Biology fieldtrip to Indonesia  
1st wk Sailing Championships  
6 - 15 Riding holiday in South Africa (1 week)  
8 - 14 Music Instrumental Trip to France  
tbc CCF Army Summer Camp

## **Homework**

Homework is a very important part of the learning process for our pupils. It gives them time to reflect, to develop good study habits, fosters the skills of independent learning, and helps them to consolidate what they learn in class.

It is not surprising that parents generally like homework and that generally pupils dislike it. We try to make homework interesting by setting creative as well as critical homework tasks, and by giving students choices in their homework assignments. At the same time, we would rather that staff did not set homework on occasion if it is not thought meaningful or appropriate to do so.

It is important that students use their homework time properly. This means spending enough time on it to submit well-presented and completed work. But it means, too, that students should not routinely spend more time on homework than is designated. If you find that your son/daughter spends too much/too little time on homework, please contact the tutor in the first instance, who will then speak to the teacher(s) involved and determine the best course of action.

The timings of homework are under review, but currently:

- Year 7, 8, and 9 pupils are set three 30 minute homeworks (Monday to Friday), though in Year 9 some science homeworks will last 40 minutes.
- Year 10 and 11 pupils are set three 40 minute homeworks, though some science homeworks may be 50 minutes.
- Sixth Form pupils are advised to spend 4 hours per week for each subject at Higher Level, and 3 hours per week for each subject at Standard Level. This includes use of private study periods in the library.

All students are issued with school diaries, in which they should enter their homework tasks. Please feel free to monitor their use of these diaries, and ensure they are used effectively. Also, please ensure that the space in which they work at home is sufficiently clear of clutter and generally quiet and free of distractions. The use of iPods and music is discouraged, particularly when completing work with strong verbal content such as language vocabulary, English or History essays.

Finally, where Internet research is required, teachers should give specific sites for reference, and this should help save students' time. Please contact the tutor if you feel your son/daughter is spending too much time fruitlessly searching for things on the Internet.

## **Learning Support**

In general, staff are very generous with time and regularly give extra help.

More formally, support is available for pupils with learning difficulties from the Learning Support department which helps pupils with study skills and organisation, as well as offering professional diagnosis of dyslexia, dyspraxia, and other learning difficulties.

- **One timetabled lesson per week** is delivered to each student who needs help, with reports written on progress
- Pupils with specific learning difficulties may be allowed to use laptops in class and be granted extra time in exams
- English as an Additional Language (EAL) is available for non-native speakers
- Modern Language Assistants help with conversation classes
- Setting in Maths, Science and Languages helps to support the less able as well as to accelerate the learning of the more able
- Departmental clinics exist to support pupils who might struggle in a subject
- Revision sessions and seminars run by departments help to reinforce learning

In addition, help is available for students who experience problems with essay planning, hand-writing, note-taking and general organisational study skills.

### **Library**

The School library is available for use by all pupils, and those new to the school will be given a short induction course on its procedures. The library is used chiefly by Sixth Formers for private study periods and may be used by all pupils before School, during lunchtime and until 20.30 each weekday (16.30 on Fridays before weekend exeat), and 16.00 on Saturdays.

### **Reports, Grades and Parents' Evenings**

Most pupils receive one set of grades each term and two full progress reports each year. Timings of grades, reports and parents' evenings are printed in the school Calendar, as are the grade descriptors. There is one consultation evening for parents each year. Details of how parents' evenings are arranged will be sent out nearer the time.

### **Plagiarism**

The school expects candidates to show intellectual honesty in the completion and submission of all work.

(a) What is plagiarism?

- taking someone else's words, images or ideas from a published source (book or Internet) and trying to pass them off as your own
- copying from someone else or allowing someone else to copy from you

Plagiarism is a form of cheating, which is taken very seriously by the school and by examination boards.

(b) How to avoid plagiarism

- If pupils want to use the same wording as a published source, they should simply place quotation marks around the passage and state where it came from; this is called referencing
- Include a bibliography which lists details (author, title, date) of the publication(s) you have used in your research
- Students should never copy from any student or lend work to another student so that it may be copied

(c) Coursework

Coursework provides students with an opportunity for independent research into a topic. This may involve doing research in textbooks and on the Internet. If students copy the words or ideas of others and don't show their sources, they will be committing plagiarism – and that is against exam board regulations.

(d) Penalties

If work is submitted as coursework to an exam board and it is discovered to have been plagiarised, there will be very serious consequences:

- the work will be awarded zero
- the student will be disqualified from that examination and may be disqualified or even debarred from other exams

Pupils, especially those undertaking formal coursework, are given talks and guidance on how to avoid plagiarism, and are asked to sign codes of conduct with regard to intellectual honesty. Please help to reinforce this at home.