

Dear Parents/Carers

The Autumn term is always a busy one for Tapton with so many events and opportunities for students to get involved in the wider life of the school. Our Y7s have settled in really well to life at Tapton, building strong relationships with teachers and other students and taking responsibility for their learning. They particularly enjoyed their homework rewards party in October and it was wonderful to see so many parents at our Parent Review Afternoons in November.

We were really proud to feature in the Sunday Times Top 5 schools in the North of England and the top 20 non-selective schools in the country – a testament to the hard work of all our students, but particularly those in Y11 and Y13 in 2017-18. They achieved so much and have gone on to do amazing things following strong results.

School will finish at 12.30 for students on Friday 21st December. This day will be a non uniform day in aid of three charities: Roundabout, The British Heart Foundation and Save the Children. We wish everyone a happy and relaxing Christmas break and a Happy New Year. We'll be back at school at 9.15 on Monday 7th January.

Year 10

Year 10 students have recently received their first track detailing their performance in GCSE subjects. The week beginning the 14th January will see Year 10 complete their next phase of assessments leading to their second tracking in early February.

Year 11

We were delighted to see so many students and families attend the Careers and Revision event on the 24th October 2018. This was followed by our superbly attended Sixth Form Open Evening on Tuesday 20th November. We would like to thank everyone for their support and attendance at these important events.

Year 11 Parents' Evening is on Wednesday 12th December. We look forward to seeing all parents and carers in order to discuss your child's progress and achievement in the build up to the trial exams in February next year. Ms Grewal will be repeating the revision presentation at 4pm in the New Hall prior to parents' evening appointments at 4.30pm.

The UCAS application process for Post-16 study has now started and one-to-one meetings with Tapton students are underway involving all Y11s. These meetings include discussions on subject choice, programmes of study and all post-18 destinations. External applicants will be invited into school in the New Year.

We look forward to a successful admissions cycle and wish all our students the very best, whatever direction they choose to take in September.

Year 12 and 13

Our annual 6th form Charity Week will take place in the final week of term with lots of festive frolics, various themed days and activities to entertain all years. Proceeds will go to the same three charities mentioned above: Roundabout, The British Heart Foundation and Save the Children.

We also have our A Level Certificate Evening to award last year's Y13 students with their certificates at 7pm on Thursday 20th December in the hall at Tapton. It would be wonderful to see as many ex-students as possible returning to celebrate their success.

Tracking and Reporting on Progress

This academic year we have made significant changes to our assessment and reporting processes. These are a result of:

- Changes to Key Stage 1 and 2 curriculum and testing
- Knowledge gained through experience and our performance in the new 9-1 graded GCSEs
- Working in collaboration with the other Tapton School Academy Trust secondary schools (Chaucer and Forge Valley)
- Feedback from stakeholder groups

We are also mindful of addressing teacher workload.

In recent years we asked our departments and teachers to assess against GCSE standards from Year 7. The assessments utilised in this period were robust. However, the GCSE grading process in these early years of secondary education did at times lead to a confusing picture for students and their parents/carers. For some students the differences seen in performance across their subjects could appear vast. In reality, when students take their final GCSEs these differences are rarely greater than one or two grades.

To improve our accuracy of assessment and reporting we have now simplified the process. Departments and teachers will continue to set, mark and provide feedback on robust assessments. We are then collecting a percentage score to show how well a student has done on each assessment, which is shown on the report. Also on the report is the 'majority' range of scores for students with similar starting points when entering Tapton School (based on KS2 test scores). This is the range of scores achieved for approximately 90% of this group. Some students therefore can have assessment percentages which sit outside of the majority range. Students falling below this range in more than three subjects will be identified for intervention and further support. Please note if a child receives 0% on their track, it means they may have been absent from the assessment. Our behaviour codes remain the same as in previous years with a slight change in Learner Levels, as they now have limiting judgements introduced to highlight the importance of building independence.

In Year 10 and 11 when students are completing GCSE studies we are collecting and reporting a percentage score and a current GCSE grade.

We have also reduced the amount of tracks for Years 7 – 10 to ensure quality and address workload for our staff. Students will receive the following tracks:

- Year 7: Autumn and Summer track with Parents Evening on Tuesday 9th July
- Year 8: Autumn and Summer track with Parents Evening on Thursday 14th March
- Year 9: Autumn and Spring track with Parents Evening on Thursday 31st January
- Year 10: Autumn and Summer track with Parents Evening on Thursday 20th June

We hope that these changes will allow all stakeholders to gain a realistic and clear picture of an individual's progress. We will continue to seek and value your feedback on these and other aspects of our communication with home.

If you have any further questions regarding this new process please contact Hayley Sharman for KS3 or Harkiran Grewal for KS4.

Tapton in the Community

We continue to try and provide a presence in Crosspool and Ranmoor at lunchtime and after school and have talked to all students about our high expectations. Do let us know if you see anything that concerns you by contacting us via this email address: enquiries@taptonschool.co.uk

On Monday 3rd December we held our 3rd Parent Forum for families in the Netherthorpe and Upperthorpe community at Zest. It was great to talk through issues with parents, representatives from the Mosque, the council and other community groups. We will be holding a further meeting in March with a focus on homework, revision and study skills. Date to follow.

Road Safety and Parking on Site

There have been a number of issues that have raised concerns for the safety of students and staff in the car park. Please therefore be reminded that you should only be coming into the car park to drop off and pick up your child if you have been issued with a pass by the school office. You should use the intercom to gain access and not tailgate.

As the nights are getting darker we also need to be even more vigilant when driving in the car park and the roads around school. Please encourage your child to wear reflective clothing, particularly when riding bikes which should also have lights. There have been a number of close calls in the local area and we need to keep the children safe as they come to and from school. People in the local community are very supportive of the school, however during major events such as parents evening parking can become an issue – please show courtesy to local residents when parking and do not block driveways or limit access.

Upcoming dates for your diary

Wed 12th December	Y11 Parents Evening
Wed 12th December	Y11 Revision presentation, 4pm in the New Hall – repeat of October revision presentation
Thurs 13th December	Christmas Concert
w/c Mon 17th December	Sixth Form Charity Week
Tues 18th December	Ranmoor Carol Concert, 7.30pm
Wed 19th December	Movement Evening, 6pm
Thurs 20th December	A Level Certificate Evening, 7pm
Fri 21st December	School finishes at 12.30 for students
Mon 7th January 2019	School restarts at 9.15am
w/c Mon 7th January	Y12 Assessment Week
Tues 8th January	Y10 Art – V&A Gallery visit
Tues 22nd January	Y9 Options Evening, 6pm
Wed 23rd January	Y11 Poetry Live Trip
Tues 29th January	Y8 & Y9 HPV Immunisations
Thurs 31st January	Y9 Parents Evening

Thanks for your continued support of our school,

Kat Rhodes and Adrian May