Dear Parent/Carer

There are a significant number of areas that parents of different year groups need to be aware of in the next few weeks. Therefore, I have divided this letter into headings to make it easier for parents to access the relevant information regarding their son.

All parents: ‘Show my Homework’
Following the success of putting homework on the school website, the school has decided to invest in software that means that students and parents can access the homework being set by teachers on line. Therefore, at the start of next term teachers will be given training on the setting of homework using the ‘Show my Homework’ portal. Initially, homework for Years 11, 12 and 13 will be set using this system before being rolled out into Years 9 and 10 and then Years 7 and 8. Students and parents will receive log-ons so that they can access their child’s individual homework. The school will also be able to monitor the quantity and quality of homework being set for all students as I know this has been a concern for some parents in some year groups.

By summer half term all students and parents will have access and be using ‘Show my Homework’ as a central point for checking what homework has been set. It will also help parents check if their sons have completed the homework that the teachers have set.

Years 7-10 – pen colours
As parents will recall, I wrote to you a few weeks ago explaining that students will need to use specific colours for specific tasks in their books from next term. We will expect all written work to be completed in black ink. This is because almost all exam boards now scan in student responses before they are emailed out across the country, and even the world, to be marked. Therefore, it is essential that students’ writing is clear and legible in black ink in order to give them the best chance of success when their work is being read on a screen.

Students will then be expected to proof read homework and extended written pieces correcting factual spelling and grammar errors. This needs to be done in blue ink so that teachers can easily see that students have done this. During registration time in Term 5, form tutors will be providing guidance for students on how to proof read effectively so that students know what they are looking for and what is expected of them during this process.

Students have become very good at completing their student responses and in future student responses and peer assessments will be completed in green so that these can be clearly identified when conducting assessment audits. It will also enable students to find their student responses quickly and easily when asked to reflect on them by their teachers.
Our expectation is that all students will have the correct pen available and use these from the start of next term. We will, however, not apply sanctions to students who do not have the correct pen for the first two weeks of term whilst students get used to the new system. However, from Tuesday 6th May students who do not have the correct colour pen to complete the task set by their teacher will receive a sanction on their Reward and Sanction card. We have purchased a large number of green, black and blue pens which students can purchase from the Holcombe Office at a cost of 10p if they forget or are unable to purchase one over the Easter holidays.

**Year 11, 12 and 13: Easter Revision School**
Parents and students have received an Easter Revision School schedule of support sessions being run by staff during the Easter holidays. I would be grateful for parental support in ensuring that students attend these sessions in order to make the best use of this time.

**Year 12 and 13 Mock Exams**
Parents and students have been informed that Year 12 and 13 students will be taking mock exams in the first week back after Easter. Each subject has set three papers that students should prepare for, each one of which will be used in the exam week. Students and parents should be clear that the outcomes of these mock exams could potentially impact on their final entry for specific subjects. Where students achieve E or U grades or are well below their target grades parents may be asked to come into school to discuss support for their child during Term 5 and 6.

**Year 11**
The school has subscribed to a facility called GCSE Pod.com. Parents and students have received a letter regarding how to log-on to this website and facility. This is an excellent resource for students to recap their learning and fill in any gaps they may have in their notes when preparing for their exams. The ability to download the podcasts anywhere to an MP3 or mobile phone also makes this an excellent revision resource. Therefore, I would urge all parents to ensure that their son completes their registration to this website and make use of this excellent revision resource.

**House competitions and House Nights**
This term has seen House competitions go from strength to strength with quizzes, sporting competitions, academic progress and attendance as well as the reward points for the boys, all contributing significantly to the House points total. All Houses will have a House Night in the second week back and I know that parents have already received letters regarding these. However, as winners of the Term 4 competition, Guardian will receive pizza on their House Night in recognition of their victory. I am also aware that only in the last couple of days the overall leader of the House competition has changed from Conquest to Guardian.
As parents know, at the end of each term some staff leave us for pastures new and this term we say goodbye and good luck to Mr Benwell, Mr Thomas and Mrs Brooks. Next term we will be welcoming Ms Martin in Geography, Mr Nield in Maths and Mr Hayes as Head of History.

Mr Anderson has been appointed as Associate Leader for KS5 replacing Mr Benwell and Mr Nanson has been promoted to Head of PE.

I would like to wish everyone a peaceful and restful break.

Yours sincerely

S. Gardner
Principal