



Sir John Cass's Foundation and Red Coat CofE Secondary School & Sixth Form College

Headteacher: Mr P. Woods

March 2018

Dear parents / guardians,

As we fast approach the start of the summer term our Year 11 and 13 students will soon be taking their examinations. We hope that full advantage will be taken over the Easter period to engage in a revision programme and to use the various support sessions which will be running in school. Full details of the programme can be found on the school website. The key message is to make the remaining time count and to use time productively to ensure the success that all our students deserve.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues who have worked exceptionally hard to offer students not only a range of learning opportunities during lesson time, but also a wealth of options during extracurricular sessions. I cannot emphasise enough the importance of extracurricular activities to the wider development of our students and the time given by staff to run lunchtime clubs, breakfast sessions, evening events, and others is very much appreciated. My sincere thanks go to all staff and students for engaging in the further enrichment of learning at Sir John Cass Red Coat.

Examinations – GCSE, A level + internal (Year 7)

Guiding and supporting students in preparing for their exams is a high priority for us. It is essential that our GCSE and A level students engage in serious revision and preparation for the forthcoming examinations over the Easter period. For some students their first examinations will be in April immediately on our return from the holiday.

A good 'rule of thumb' for this stage of the year is that students should be completing 10-15 hours of study outside of lessons per week, and this study should be high quality and focused on revision and preparation that addresses the individual student's areas of greatest need. Students may need to be reminded of the following key points about study and it would be very useful if these could be reinforced at home:

- **Variety** – do not focus on one subject for too long (30-60 mins on one subject per study session is probably about right);
- **Breaks** – build breaks for relaxation and sustenance into your plan. These help to keep your mind fresh;
- **Chunking** – make sure you spread your hours into small chunks throughout the week. Trying to do 8 hours on a Sunday does not work for most students!
- **Rewards** – build small rewards (e.g. social media time) into the plan, but make sure that these can be 'claimed' only once something has been done well;
- **No distractions** – there is scientific evidence to suggest that our brains lose capacity for memorising and processing if we have certain types of stimulus around us. TV is particularly bad, as is lots of movement and domestic noise. We all work best if we are able to find a place to focus on our work;
- **Active revision** – research shows that we retain very little information if we simply read something. We need to do something with the information in order for it to 'stick' and for us to be able to apply it well. Creating mind maps or flow diagrams using our notes or books can be very helpful, as can answering questions that focus on the materials we are reading.

Online safety

The Local Authority has received a number of notifications about children of primary school age in particular accessing a number of apps on social media devices at home which appear to be games but are actually live online chatrooms. Through these apps children can be encouraged to share personal details and there is the danger of exposure to inappropriate content. The apps include Monkey, Moviestar Planet and Roblox. We do considerable work to raise online safety with our students and would like to encourage parents to monitor what children are accessing and to ensure appropriate filters are in place on social media devices to bar access to inappropriate sites.

World Book Day

This year our World Book Day celebrations were an enormous success. Staff and students dressed up in book-related costumes and the day was full of literary fun and events. Thank you to Ms Charman and Ms Dow for once again organising these fun and engaging activities for our students and staff to join in with.

International Women's Day

A whole school assembly run by students kicked off International Women's Day at school on March 8th where we were introduced to the Press for Progress Campaign and were given examples of inspirational role models. This was a further example of outstanding assemblies run by students this year.

Sir John Cass Red Coat Sixth Form

Students in our Sixth Form were busy earlier this term with their university applications. We are delighted that 72% have received offers to Russell Group universities this year. The Russell Group represents 24 of the leading UK universities including Oxford and Cambridge. This is testament to the outstanding abilities of the students and the hard work of the Sixth Form team. There is still time to apply for a place in our Sixth Form and to join this thriving learning community. Applications must be received by the end of March. Details can be found on our school website – www.sjcr.net

Lent / Easter

During the period of Lent students have been attending a fortnightly Eucharist run by Reverend Trevor Critchlow, our school's chaplain, at St Dunstan's Church during Friday lunchtimes. Students participate in the Eucharist by reading and by bringing their friends - of all faiths - to participate in the service. This is one way in which the school can participate in prayer and fasting during Lent. This is also a unique way of bringing the whole of the school community together in prayer on a Friday, as our Muslim students also attend prayers on Friday at lunchtime.

Key Events for this term

All dates can be found on the school website, however below are some of the key events coming up in the next half term. Please check our website and social media feeds for updates.

Spring Term

Year 7 Exam Week	from Monday 16 th April 2018
Year 10 Parents' Evening	Wednesday 25 th April 2018
Year 12 Exams	from Monday 30 th April 2018
Bank holiday	Monday 7 th May 2018
Year 8 Parents' Evening	Wednesday 23 rd May 2018
Half term holiday	Monday 28 th May – Friday 1 st June 2018

Bromley Street – One Way System:

We were informed by the Council earlier in the year that Bromley Street was to become a one way road. The plan was postponed and we are awaiting further updates.

The Sir John Cass Red Coat E-bulletin

Thank you to those parents who receive our communication electronically. It is a far more effective method than student post and helps to keep you fully informed and briefed. Therefore, please ensure that we have accurate contact information particularly when you change mobile or internet/email providers.

Easter is the most important feast of the Christian calendar and as the forty days of Lent conclude I would like to wish you all a happy and holy Easter and look forward to seeing students back in school at the start of the summer term on Monday 16th April.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Woods, Headteacher