



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

We will achieve excellence and inspire generations the Cass way

Headteacher: Mr P. Woods

March 2019

Dear parents and carers,

As Lent commences we enter into a fascinating time of year as we see the days lengthen, spring flowers emerge and we share a collective sense of anticipating Easter. Equally this is, of course, a vitally important time for those students in Years 11 and 13 who are busy preparing themselves for external examinations. I recognise that this can be a stressful period for families, students, and the wider school community. We offer a wide range of support for our students ranging from tuition, Saturday sessions, revision material and more. I would like to encourage all those involved to take full advantage of the offer in order to ensure success this summer.

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. For some GCSE students their first examinations will be in April.

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 minutes 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 in one go 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.

Please encourage your child in revision for examinations and students should speak to their individual subject teachers for any specific guidance on exam preparation.

Year 9 Parents' Evening + Year 9 Options 2019

I would like to remind parents of students in Year 9 that the Options Evening takes place on Monday 11th March. The evening starts at 4pm with a number of presentations. Please arrive via the Bromley Street gate. Full details have been circulated in a separate letter which can also be found on the school's website.

Parent Survey Results

As I explained in my last letter, at the Academic Review Day on 8th January we asked parents to complete a survey covering a range of issues. The feedback we receive is important to us and helps to shape future planning. The results of the survey can be found on the school website – www.sjcr.net.

Last year in response to feedback, we focused on improving communications with parents with improvements in the use of our website and social media. We also increased the frequency of the headteacher's letters.

We also worked hard to improve the enrichment offer and to share this with students and parents. In January 88% of you agreed that the offer is good with 7% not being aware of what is on offer, an improvement upon the previous year. Please note that we publish an updated programme for clubs and enrichment activities on our website each term.

Currently we are focusing on homework and independent learning. Although 89% agree that students are getting appropriate homework, we feel we can do better. Please help us to monitor that your child is completing homework. Students will write their homework in their planners and we ask that you check the planner each week and sign. The tutor does the same.

There are many very positive aspects to our school. It is very important, however, that we do not rest on our laurels and continue to work together in partnership to ensure that Sir John Cass Red Coat continues to be an outstanding school.

The Sir John Cass Red Coat E-bulletin

Thank you to those parents who receive our E-bulletin. This provides regular updates and helps to keep you fully informed and briefed. Please ensure that we have accurate contact information particularly when you change mobile or internet/email providers.

Key Events for this term

Key events for the coming weeks are listed below. Please check our website and social media feeds for regular updates on events.

World Book Day	Thursday 7 th March
Year 9 Options Evening	Monday 11 th March
Year 7 examinations	From Monday 18 th March
Year 10 Parents' Evening	Thursday 21 st March
Year 8 Parents' Evening	Tuesday 2 nd April

Updates on work at Raines Foundation School

I hope that you have had a chance to read the Ofsted report, following a monitoring visit to Raines in December. This can be found on the Ofsted and Raines Foundation School websites. As I explained to you in September, the arrangement for me to work as Executive Headteacher across Sir John Cass Red Coat and Raines was a temporary one. Following discussions with the Diocese, Oaklands School will become the support school for Raines from April onwards. Patrice Canavan OBE, Headteacher at Oaklands School will be taking over from me as Executive Headteacher and Simon Ramsay, currently a Deputy Headteacher at Oaklands School will take up a head of school role at Raines. This means that I will be returning to Sir John Cass Red Coat five days per week.

Thank you again for your support and I will be writing to you again later this term.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Woods
Headteacher