



14 November 2019

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Autumn Term Updates from the Principal

As the second half of the Autumn Term has now commenced, it is important that we provide you with a summary of the changes we have made to support our students' learning and their character development.

Firstly, with regard to Teaching and Learning, we have adopted a more rigorous approach to our feedback to students and their Home Learning expectations. This includes:

Feedback

Following the success of our introduction of the Ivybridge Learning Strategy and accompanying bespoke subject specific exercise books, we have made another exciting development in how we provide feedback to our students. In line with changes across the educational sector and on a local and national level, we are making a shift from teachers writing extensive comments in exercise books to more immediate, live marking and feedback. Teachers will be monitoring written work in exercise books regularly and recording learning points in a Log Book which will allow for more responsive and personalised planning for subsequent lessons. Our intent is for students to always know how they are progressing and what they need to do to improve; this approach will allow teachers to act quickly to support students to make rapid progress whilst allowing them to continue to enjoy their learning journey.

Home Learning

We would like to update you on some key developments with regards to Home Learning. There are two strands to the Home Learning Strategy:

- Subject Specific Home Learning: specific subject tasks linked to the curriculum.
- Guided Independent Home Learning: routine learning and self-testing of core subject knowledge (linked to the KITE strategy).

Guidance is given on the minimum amount of time students should be spending on Home Learning in each subject over a two week period. Please see the information in the Student Learning Journals and on the College website for further information. We are now using Epraise to communicate Home Learning with students, parents and carers, and ask that you check this regularly to support your child with their Home Learning. User guides are available on the Epraise website to support students, parents and carers with the use of Epraise for Home Learning.

KITE

The recently reformed curriculum has a much greater need for students to learn, recall and retrieve knowledge. In order to help students develop the skills needed to successfully learn key knowledge and to give them some time in College, outside of their normal lessons to do this, we have introduced the KITE programme. KITE stands for Knowing, Interleaving, Testing and Exceeding. Every student has been issued with a KITE booklet. The booklet contains the basic knowledge they are expected to learn this year in each subject. Students will learn how to put this in context and how to apply it through lessons. During Tutor time, students will be shown techniques to help them learn and remember this knowledge. Time will be devoted to creating revision resources and for low-stakes testing on the material during Tutor time.

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We are extremely excited about this new programme and believe that it will support students to learn the key knowledge needed for each subject and, moreover, help them to develop the skills they need to become lifelong learners. The KITE booklets will also be used as part of the Home Learning in each subject and it is expected that students use their KITE booklets at home to self-quiz and to create flash cards and mind maps to help them remember this knowledge, use it in context and create connections. Please support your child in using their KITE booklet at home.

We continue to strive towards achieving excellent standards and expectations across the College, to help to develop and support a calm, purposeful and respectful environment in which our students can learn. Thus, we have already made a positive start to this year and have acknowledged students' successes via our rewards system, focussing on the four key areas of PACE (Pride of Presentation, Attitude, Conduct and Effort). Our Epraise system is being used to award and monitor students' achievements; please kindly contact us if you require any assistance in accessing your child's Epraise account.

Following feedback from parents and students last year, we have introduced a same day Lunchtime Detention, to replace the previous After College Detention. This will ensure that consequences will be followed up swiftly and students can learn from their action, without delay. In striving for high expectations, we are encouraging our students to take responsibility for their actions and the immediate consequence.

Your child's first academic report for this year is enclosed with this letter. With this, information and guidance with regards to updates in the way we assess students and report to students, parents and carers. The changes are in line with National data updates and to support the College PACE strategy. All future reports will be issued **online** via the SIMS Parent App. If you have not already signed up to the app, we have resent you the joining instructions via email from SIMS. Please follow the link within the email to set up your account. Further guidance can be found in the Parents' section of the College website.

We hope that both students and parents are finding that these new strategies will continue to support our constant strive to provide the very best education for your child. Following consultation with the Parent Forum we have introduced a new Parent Communication Strategy in order that we can strengthen our lines of communication at all levels. We recommend that parents use these guidelines to ensure your enquiries are responded to appropriately and in a timely fashion. Details of this are available on the Parents' page of our website under 'Communication with the College' <https://www.ivybridge.devon.sch.uk/page/?title=Communication+with+the+College&pid=1396>

Finally, enclosed is a copy of a Media Declaration Form and an Absence Request Information Form, which we ask that you kindly complete and return via your child's Tutor by Wednesday, 20 November 2019 at the latest.

Yours faithfully

Rachel Hutchinson
Principal

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