



Ref: 0014

September 2018



Dear Parents/Carers

I hope that your family had an enjoyable summer and that your daughter is looking forward to the year ahead. I am delighted to be writing to you at the start of this new academic year to let you know how well our students have done in the public examinations this summer and to bring you up to date with events in school.

EXAMINATION RESULTS

GCSE

We are very proud of our Year 11 students who have achieved outstanding GCSE results yet again this year. Despite the volatile national picture, more challenging qualifications and a new GCSE grading 99% of students achieved grades 4 – 9 in English and Maths. 34 students achieved grades 7-9 or A-A* in all their subjects. 13% of grades were at the top grade 9 or A*. A staggering 55% of all grades were A*- A or 7 - 9 with 77% of grades were A*- B, or 6 - 9. Despite the raising of the bar nationally we are delighted with the achievement of our students thanks to the hard work of students and staff, and the continuing support of parents and carers.

A LEVEL

We were thrilled for our Year 13 students who excelled this year with 71% of all grades at A*-B. This is on par with last year with both attainment and progress extremely high nationally. Over 130 students have taken up University places based on their excellent results. We send our best wishes to our students as they go on to further success in university, gap years, employment and many other exciting ventures. Good Luck!

SCHOOL SITE

Over the summer holiday the site team has been busy improving the environment at school. This has included the major refurbishment of the Gym, Fitness Room, changing rooms and toilets. This has included new walls, decoration and flooring creating a much more vibrant learning environment. Perhaps not so glamorous, but equally important, a new boiler has been fitted in the school. In addition, the Music Department has had a face-lift with a bespoke learning space created for GCSE and A Level along with new storage space and new instrumental music practice classrooms.

It has therefore been a very busy summer to ensure your daughters have the very best learning environment in which to study and learn.

STAFF

We welcome new staff to Parkstone this year:

Teaching Staff

- Mrs Helen Kellaway Head of Business and Economics
- Mrs Hayley McCallister Head of Physical Education
- Mr Mark Mortell Head of Computing
- Miss Rebekah Champion Teacher of English and Head of KS4 English
- Mr Phillip Watts Teacher of Biology
- Miss Shelby McHugh Teacher of Biology
- Miss Sarah Long Teacher of Physics
- Mrs Cathy Hirst Teacher of English
- Mr Derek Collins Teacher of RP

We have also made some internal appointments:

- Mrs Steph Izard Assistant Headteacher – one year
- Mr Paul Collis Academic Head of Sixth Form – one year
- Mrs Julie Kelly Assistant Head of Sixth Form – one year
- Miss Velasco de la Rosa Head of Spanish
- Mrs Rachel Fooks Head of Year 8
- Mrs Sarah Huggins Assistant Head of Years 7 & 8
- Miss Caroline Mitchell Assistant Head of Year 9
- Dr Hannah Mathers Assistant Head of Year 10

SCHOOL PRIORITIES FOR 2018-19

We have worked with staff, governors and students to develop a 5 - year vision for Parkstone. We are ambitious for your daughters in all aspects of their school lives and believe that these priorities reflect our relentless pursuit of excellence.

In our continuing steps towards our world class school we have the following priorities for this academic year 2018-19:



STUDENT OUTCOMES

- To improve student global and cultural awareness
- To sustain A Level progress at national average and improve towards significantly positive

TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

- To further develop literacy through wider reading and feedback for literacy
- To expand the research led school improvement approach
- To innovate and improve homework provision across the school to improve learning
- To improve systems of feedback to improve impact and reduce teacher workload

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT, BEHAVIOUR AND WELL-BEING

- Introduce 'My Concern' to improve communication and record keeping of safeguarding reports
- Evaluate the impact of the Learning Space in improving mental health support
- Evaluate the impact of the new behaviour system on learning and consistency
- Expand the wellbeing programme and Time to Talk to Years 9 & 11 following successful pilot

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- To review the key stage three curriculum to maximise impact on learning
- To develop student leadership skills through targeted training and strategic student leadership goals
- To implement the action plan for improving quality of progress information to parents
- Move towards full achievement of the Gatsby benchmarks
- To continue process of expenditure reduction and income generation to balance budget
- Increase proportion of applications from disadvantaged families

SIXTH FORM

- To further develop post 18 advice and guidance
- To evaluate the impact of the enhancement and enrichment curriculum
- To increase retention and recruitment of students into the Sixth Form
- To review and further develop the transition between Year 11 and 12 to facilitate improved learning and wellbeing

FUTURE EVENTS

Friday 21 September is an INSET Day for staff and there will be no school for students on that day. The school will re-start at the usual time on **Monday 24 September**. Please note that **Friday 19 October** will also be an INSET Days.

Important dates

INSET DAYS – the school will be CLOSED to students

- **Friday 21 September 2018** - *Launch of Parkstone's professional development programme for teachers and Annual Teacher Appraisal.*
- **Friday 19 October 2018** - *Joint training for Poole secondary schools with each school focusing on one of the following themes - leadership, behaviour, student wellbeing and SEND Support.*
- **Monday 7 January 2019** – *Staff lesson planning time*
- **Tuesday 23 April 2019** – *Staff lesson planning time*
- **Thursday 13 June 2019** - *conclusion and results presentation from this year's professional development programme*

Early Closures

- End of Autumn Term, Friday 21 Dec - Early closure 12.30pm
- Open Evening - Thursday 4 July 2019 – Early closure 1.15pm
- End of Summer Term, Friday 19 July - Early closure 12.30pm

USEFUL INFORMATION

SCHOOL MEALS

Please remember to load dinner money on your daughter's ParentPay account to allow her to purchase her lunch. Our school catering provider, Innovate, have made many changes over the summer to improve their service even further. New products and flavours have been introduced including sushi in the sixth form café and a greater vegetarian and vegan range across the whole school. Prices of healthy items have been reduced and all cakes now have 25% less sugar. Environmentally friendly changes have been made including the removal of all plastic cutlery and the reduction in packaging – in addition all packaging and cups are now 100% recyclable.

TRAVEL AND ACCESS

We have 1250 students at Parkstone, most of whom arrive or leave in a twenty-minute period at the beginning or end of the school day and so we have to put in place procedures to ensure the safety of our students.

If you are driving your daughter to school please try to park outside the school grounds, preferably on Sopers Lane beyond the school on the road towards Siemens as this is safest for your daughter as she will not have to cross a road to reach the school. The only part of the school grounds where you can drop off your daughter at this time is the turning circle at the bottom of the drive. It is not possible to come further up the school drive. At the end of the school day I regret that it will not be possible to come into the school grounds at all as there will be so many buses arriving and leaving at the same time. I do ask for your continued support in this.

However if your daughter stays late for an after school activity (ie after 4.00 pm) then we do ask you to come up the drive as we do not like students waiting outside school either in groups or by themselves. This also applies if you are collecting your daughter during the school day for an appointment. If your daughter has a medical condition which limits her mobility we ask that you contact the school and a special pass will be made available to you that will enable you to drop your daughter off or collect her nearer to the main entrance to the school buildings.

Some students walk home from school or from buses or trains. It is far better if they walk in groups of at least two and keep to well-lit streets and not take short cuts. For much of the year it is dark in the morning and after school. If your daughter wishes to walk home from school but does not know anyone who walks to the same area please ask her to speak to someone in the school office and we shall see if we can put her in contact with other students who use the same route.

We ask that all students who cycle to school wear a cycle helmet and reflective armbands.

UNIFORM

We welcome your continued support in ensuring that your daughter leaves for school in appropriate attire. If you are unsure of the uniform or dress code please see our website <http://www.parkstone.poole.sch.uk> or contact the school. We do have some spare items of uniform in school that we are able to lend to girls for a short period of time who do not have the correct uniform. In addition, our PFSA runs a "new to you" uniform sale and would welcome any unwanted uniform for sale to other parents.

We are strict in applying our dress code for all students. There will be no exceptions. I welcome your support in ensuring your daughter returns to school with the correct uniform, skirt length and jewellery.

You will have read my letter last term outlining an important change that students in Years 7 to 11 will **not** be able to use a mobile device on the school premises. I understand that some parents / carers will want their daughters to carry a mobile device for security on the journey to and from school. If this is the case it **must** be switched off and kept securely in a bag or secured locker. **Please be aware that we will confiscate any such device seen within the school premises and will issue an automatic next day detention.** We encourage you not to allow your daughter to bring such a device unless absolutely necessary. Urgent messages can be communicated by reception. I welcome your support in enforcing this new rule for the education benefits and wellbeing of your daughter.

TRIPS PROCEDURES

As usual the school will be running a variety of trips and visits to enhance the education of your daughter. To follow DFE guidance we have to ensure that all paperwork, including consent forms and any necessary medical information is collated for all students going on a visit at least a week prior to the visit taking place. We must insist that parents complete all paperwork by the due deadline and that it is delivered by the student to the appropriate place in school. Unfortunately, students will not be allowed to go on a trip if the required paperwork is not completed and with the trip organiser by the deadline. Alternative arrangements will be made for your daughter for the duration of the trip.

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE

We believe that attendance in class is vital for success in school, indeed there is a proven link between attendance and academic achievement. I would therefore ask for your support in ensuring your daughter has full attendance.

We ask that you inform us of your daughter's absence from school as early as possible but definitely **by 9.30 am on each day of absence**. The School Office is open at 8.00 am but an answering machine is available if you wish to contact us even earlier. This call **must** be followed by a letter, outlining the reason for the absence on the first day your daughter returns to school. Similarly, if your daughter arrives late for school e.g. due to an appointment, we do need a letter to explain the reason for this. Excellent attendance and punctuality are so important in helping your daughter gain as much as she can from school so I would ask that any appointments that she may need to attend are made outside of school hours as much as possible and if not are arranged at a time which causes least disruption to her school day.

To ensure the safety and whereabouts of all of our students we operate a system of First Day Contact. If you have not notified us about your daughter's absence by 9.30 am, a member of staff will endeavour to contact you by phone to inform you that according to our records your daughter is absent from school on that morning. In order to ensure that we do not make unnecessary phone calls, we would request your support in reinforcing to your daughter the importance of **registering with her tutor each morning** and of **signing the late book if she arrives in school late**. This will ensure that our records are as accurate as possible. Please note that this system does not replace the need for you to contact the school in the event of your daughter's absence.

CONTACT WITH THE SCHOOL

Each week all general letters which have been sent home will be posted on the website (www.parkstone.poole.sch.uk) as well as information about forthcoming events. In addition, we shall continue with the use of the Groupcall system where we are able to communicate with parents via e-mail for general school letters, reports and grade cards. You can continue to have access to your daughter's attendance, timetable and achievement information via the Expressions App. Details will shortly be provided to new parents.

ENCLOSURES

SCHOOL FUND

You may be aware that school funding over the last five years has faced consistent and significant reductions. These reductions hit grammar schools particularly hard since we cannot access streams of funding available to other schools.

I am therefore enclosing with this letter information about the **Parkstone School Fund** and hope that you will be able to support the school in this way - I am sure you are only too aware of how important these voluntary contributions are to us. I wish it was not necessary to ask for this, particularly in the current economic climate, but these small contributions do help us provide invaluable facilities for your daughters.

THE YEAR AHEAD

I know that this academic year is going to be a very busy and enjoyable year. We look forward to working with you to ensure your daughter has an enjoyable and enriching year, and hope that 2018-19 brings much happiness and success.

Yours sincerely



Tracy Harris