

Friday 18th January 2019

Dear Parent/Guardian

Re: Knowledge Organisers

Having launched our Knowledge Organisers with students at the start of this term, I would first like to take the opportunity to thank families for the overwhelming support we have received for this new homework initiative. I have been really impressed to see the high-quality homework being produced by our students and the innovative ways in which they have been memorising subject content; mini flashcards, Quizlet online apps to mention but two.

However, I am equally aware that there has been some misunderstanding underpinning the rationale for the introduction of Knowledge Organisers and I would like to take the opportunity to clarify this. The fundamental premise behind them is to increase students' knowledge of the subjects they study so that they can recall a much greater volume of knowledge and subsequently write about it in more depth in assessments and examinations.

We are undertaking a large body of work at the moment to ensure that our curriculum (what we teach students) best enables them to achieve well and confidently given the increased demands of the new GCSE and A Level specifications. To that end, it is really important that the homework which is set, underpins the learning that takes place in class and that students spend time outside of the lesson revisiting this key material. The work of strengthening our curriculum combined with the introduction of Knowledge Organisers is essentially a 5 year revision plan made up of a number of phases. The first phase is to introduce a clear and cohesive plan for homework, to ensure students complete it to a high standard and learn the basic concepts; key words, definitions etc. After half-term, teachers will begin to quiz/test students in class to ensure they are able to accurately pull this information from memory and are therefore in a stronger position to write about it in their assessments in a more structured and cohesive way. They will be practising these written skills with their teachers. The second phase of our plan will then be to get students to interact with their Knowledge Organisers by using, applying, interpreting and analysing the information to show greater understanding of the core material. This will invariably look different for each subject; multiple choice questions, short written answers or essay questions to exemplify but a few.

As we begin to think about the Knowledge Organisers for the summer term, I will be calling a number of parents and would welcome your honest feedback on the process to date. I am conscious that the formatting could have been better and we will ensure that the print is of a more manageable size and clearer for students to read. We will also be consulting with students through the Student Council and will use both sets of feedback to make appropriate adjustments moving forward.

Your help as always, is invaluable in ensuring our students are ready to learn and able to succeed in their lessons. We would therefore ask that you familiarise yourself with their homework schedule and check each night that they have completed the requisite pages. It would also be very helpful for us for you to check that their homework packs along with any other books, equipment are packed in their bag and ready to go each day.

I am more than happy to meet with individuals or families to discuss this in more detail, should you so wish. Therefore please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to arrange a meeting or phone conversation. I will also be available from Thursday 24th January from 3.30-4.00 if you'd like to drop-in for a cup of tea to ask me some questions.

Yours faithfully



Anna Mills
Deputy Headteacher