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Dear Kingsmead Families and Carers of Year Eleven Pupils

Happy New Year and welcome to the Spring Term. What a cold start to the year it has been!

We are taking the opportunity that the new year provides to revisit school expectations. This is a busy time of year for all our pupils and in particular our year elevens who will be sitting their second set of mocks before February half-term. With our largest cohort of year elevens ever, the running of the mocks is a logistical challenge. We support pupils with access arrangements and this support means the running of our exams is not like a mainstream school – the needs of individual pupils are met every step of the way, sometimes in individual spaces across the school. To this end it is key that pupils in other year groups and year eleven pupils not in exams, are following their timetables, using the support available to them across school and staying in class so that school is quiet and conducive to the mock experience being as positive as possible for all.

Most of our pupils respect and adhere to our school expectations around the handing in of phones. Pupils should not have access to vapes given the legal age required to have them - it is illegal to sell nicotine vaping products to anyone under 18 or for adults to buy them on behalf of under-18s. Unfortunately a small minority of pupils have got access to them and are bringing them in to school.

All contraband (phones and vapes) must be handed in to keep everyone in our school community safe. Parental and carer support around these issues is sought and we are grateful to those parents and carers who understand the severity of pupils having access to both items and the impact on learning, safeguarding and parity of expectations for *all* pupils.

Attending school is critical for pupils to thrive during their time with us. Without regular attendance, pupils will not make progress academically or personally and risk not fulfilling their individual potentials. We are highly ambitious for all our pupils to live as successfully, healthily and independently as possible when they leave us; good attendance to school is key to this being realised. The competition for P16 places is highly competitive and pupils who don't routinely attend school, risk finishing in year eleven and struggling to engage in education or the world of apprenticeships/work in the future, limiting their future chances.

Further dates for your diaries this half-term\*:

INSET Day: 27<sup>th</sup> January Pupils are not in school today

Year Eleven Mocks: 3<sup>rd</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> February

Year Eleven Parent Event (post mocks): 4<sup>th</sup> March 14:45 – 15:30

Year Eleven Mock Interviews: Dates to be confirmed

\*Class teachers and key workers will be in touch with individual group trips and experiences planned

**Exam Specific Information:**

On February 3<sup>rd</sup> your child will begin sitting their second set of mock GCSE examinations. These exams will take place over a period of two weeks. It is important that all pupils are as comfortable as possible with the mock exams so please share the information in this letter with them to support the ongoing discussions we are having with them at school.

These mock exams are extremely important for our pupils. Once each mock examination has finished pupils will complete the lessons from their personal timetables.

Year Eleven pupils are expected to attend all mock exams. The mock examinations will take place at the Kingsmead School in spaces best suited to pupils' needs. All pupils must adhere to the examination boards' regulations. No communication will be allowed between pupils and items such as mobile phones, smart watches, bags and belongings must be placed in an agreed area. **In the GCSE examinations failure to observe the regulations set out by the examination board will result in disqualification from the examination.** Therefore, it is important that we follow these guidelines during the mock exams to best prepare pupils.

As always if you have any questions or concerns about the mock exams or would like further clarification do not hesitate to get in touch with a Keyworker, Behaviour Mentor or the School Leadership Team.

Once the mocks are completed we are inviting parents and carers into school so that you have the opportunity to meet and speak with class teacher as well as the post-16 team. This event will take place on the 4<sup>th</sup> of March from 14:45-15:30. If you wish to attend, can you please call the school office and RSVP or let a member of your child's key team know.

Thanks for your support.

Kind regards

Liz Sanger and Emily Wilson