



# South Dartmoor Community College

Principal | Paul Collins

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Dear Parent/Carer

March 2019

I would like to confirm arrangements for the forthcoming exam period.

## UNIFORM

Year 11 students must continue to wear their uniform correctly and smartly throughout the exam period and to all exams. Students out of uniform will be at risk of not sitting examinations.

## STUDY LEAVE

Any year 11 student who has **completed all course requirements** will be able to apply to study at home from **Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May**, but can also continue to study at college.

## THE PROCESS

- ✓ Please see attached the **letter** requesting study leave. Before doing anything else please discuss with your son/daughter whether studying at home is the best option. Will they be able to study independently, purposefully and fully and have they completed all coursework requirements?
- ✓ If you agree that studying at home is the best option then please sign the form. Only after this should they go and seek the consent of each of their teachers and other relevant staff. I would ask that you support the teacher if, in their professional opinion, your son/daughter would be better served by continuing to attend their lessons.
- ✓ Your son/daughter must acquire a signature from the library staff confirming that they have no outstanding library book/s.
- ✓ Your son/daughter will be required to pay any outstanding money owed to the College.
- ✓ The tutor must sign and confirm that the ROA has been completed and they agree to home study.

Finally, once all the above has been completed a signature must be acquired from their Head of House at which point your son/daughter will be given a letter confirming that study leave has been approved. **Only at this point is attendance no longer compulsory. Study leave will start on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2019.**

All lessons will continue as normal, with every year 11 teacher available to offer support, advice and guidance. Students can attend lessons for guided revision or go to the library **but must sign in and out and be in correct uniform.**

If you decide that the best option for your son/daughter is study leave we would recommend that you encourage and support them to maintain a rigorous revision schedule. Remember regular short sessions (30 minutes) of revision are the most effective. We would also encourage students to consider the following revision tips:

### Mastering your Memory

There are many ways in which you can improve your memory to hold onto all those important facts, key quotations and formulae. Here are some to try out at home:

- **Chunk** information in to 'bite sized' portions and try a '5 a day' approach to learning or recalling key ideas – **little and often** is the best way forward; remember to prioritise the areas where you are least confident in your knowledge and understanding
- Use **Acronyms**: **T3E** in English (Technique, Evidence, Explain, Effect); **FOIL** in Maths (First, Outside, Inside, Last);
- Retrieve information from one source and **write it down in a new format** (flow diagram, mind map, chart, bullet points, key words etc.)
- **Teach something** to someone else (make sure it's an area that you have been less confident with in the past – don't just stay in your comfort zone!)
- **Say things out loud** to use a multi-sensory approach which helps with recalling information
- Ask yourself "**What makes me think that?**" to check your understanding
- **Drink water** for superior focus!
- **Practice, practice, practice** – after all, practice makes permanent!

### The Science of Revision

- Research suggests that some approaches to revision can hinder success. For example, an article published in *Psychological Science* identified that a study had found that just highlighting phrases in revision guides got in the way of students understanding the 'whole' information. So what did they find to be the most effective techniques?
- **Testing yourself** involves retrieving material from memory which improves learning in the long run. **Try this:** Read key information, then make Flash cards of the key concepts and test yourself repeatedly. The bonus is that when you get things right, the brain creates a memory trace which connects up with what you already know.
- **Planning ahead** is the best strategy – cramming for an exam has never been the best approach to keeping information in your head! So **space out your practice** to build on your knowledge over time. **Try this:** 'Space' ten 30 minute sessions over an extended period; this is far more effective than doing 5 hours in a day as it allows your brain to re-learn material that may have become lost along the way.
- **Working to Maintain Well-being**
  - **Eat Breakfast** – missing out on this important meal significantly reduces students' attention and their ability to recall information. Boost memory and concentration simply by eating a bowl of cereal!
  - **Get fresh air and exercise** to feel refreshed, reduce stress and increase your focus afterwards – you'll feel better for it.

- **Leave the phone alone!** Researchers have found that being able to see a phone reduces students' ability to focus. Time spent on screen gets in the way of grades so to avoid distractions, put the phone away – out of sight, out of mind!
- **Get enough sleep** – establish a regular bedtime and stop screen time at least an hour beforehand to get quality sleep to improve concentration, memory and mood!

We have also attached a key revision guide which contains revision support and strategies. All of the strategies have been supported by evidence from cognitive psychology. Please also use the following link to access the revision materials used during the parent and student evening in September.

<http://www.southdartmoor.devon.sch.uk/page/?title=Revision&pid=141>

### **Expectations during exam period**

The College have created an exams information booklet which can be accessed through the College website using the link below;

<http://www.southdartmoor.devon.sch.uk/page/?title=Exams%2FResults&pid=38>

*The booklet contains vital information in regards to the examination process and expectations at South Dartmoor as well as regulations set by the exam boards. It is vital that students read the booklet carefully with parents before the exam season starts. We have also added a frequently asked questions section which we hope you will find useful.*

### **SHIRT SIGNING – Monday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2019**

To mark the end of year 11 2019, South Dartmoor will be holding a shirt signing event on Monday **24<sup>th</sup> June at 2pm on the Sports field (weather permitting) or Sports hall. Students will need to be in full uniform for the shirt signing.** Some students will be sitting their final exam that morning so will already be present in college, however, other students should **attend at 2pm. There will be a free ice cream van and music** to enjoy and the collection point for their Year Book, if they have ordered and paid for a copy. In previous years this has been a great way for students to mark their final day here. The College Prom will be held at the **Moorland hotel, Haytor on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> June at 6.30pm.**

Finally, thank you for your support over the last five years. I wish you and your son/daughter well during this important time and I hope that they will make the most of the opportunities available to them in college. Should you have any concerns please contact your son/daughter's Head of House or relevant Subject Leader.

Yours faithfully,



Paul Collins – Principal



Dan Vile – Deputy Principal