



### Welcome to Year 11

Dear Parents/Carers,

I would like to take this opportunity whilst we are all still feeling (relatively!) fresh at the start of term to welcome you to the start of Year 11 - this is an exciting year for your children but also hopefully for you!

Many of my messages to the year group from last year remain the same. I will be encouraging them to continue to 'do the right thing, not the easy thing' - whether that is getting the hard homework done first, asking for help rather than keeping one's head down in silence, putting that extra bit of time and effort into the subject you struggle with most. I believe it's important to support the students but also to encourage them to have grit, courage and resilience as they face the academic challenge of this year. Equally, I want to make sure that they don't buckle under pressure and that they receive unconditional support and understanding from yourselves and from myself and my colleagues.

We have a range of support in school including academic mentoring (via tutors, myself and volunteer sixth formers in our 'Blossom' program), department specific help such as drop-in sessions and extra support, and mental health support (ranging from self-help activities to individual counselling). We hope that this academic and pastoral program of support will be beneficial and reassuring to our students and yourselves.

We also look beyond Year 11 this year and encourage the students to become informed about the range of choices available to them after they have completed their GCSEs. Mrs Wray, our careers advisor, delivered a fantastic assembly last week outlining the many pathways they might consider.

This term, all Year 11 students will be offered a one-to-one careers meeting with Mrs Wray, students in Bhutto and Blackman have already made their appointments and students in the remaining tutor groups will have completed this process by the end of term. We also hold a Futures Fair (careers fair) which will be on 11th February, with visits from a variety of employers, colleges and universities.

Please do mark Thursday 13th November in your diary for the Sixth Form open evening, we anticipate that the vast majority of students will choose to remain with us as we continue to offer inspirational learning and empowering support; this in turn leads to great results with most students going on to study at their first-choice university. We therefore strongly encourage your attendance at this extremely informative evening, so that you can gain an insight into our outstanding KS5 provision.

Of course, January is on a lot of the students' minds as that is when their mock examinations will commence, these run from January 6th up to and including Monday 19th January. More information will follow later this term regarding the expectations and logistics of this period. Parents' evening follows on Thursday 12th February, and we look forward to welcoming you to the school in person - a departure from our established remote evenings which we hope you will enjoy.

More dates of interest (albeit more to the students than you!) include the last day they have in school - Friday 1st May 2026, the Leavers' assembly will take place on this day and then study leave begins. GCSE exams commence on Thursday 7th May 2026 and run up to and including Friday 27th June, and of course, no Year 11 year can happen without our Year 11 Prom! More details will follow in due course, but for the time being please mark your calendars for Monday 29th June for this very special event.

Whilst we know that academic achievement is paramount, we do still encourage our students to engage fully in our co-curricular activities and offerings, in order to have a work-life balance and an overall sense of wellbeing. My absolute priority as their Head of Learning is the happiness of the year group and I am very willing to work with the students to ensure that this is at the core of their school life.

With very best wishes,

**Mr Robson**

Head of Learning for Year 11