



## Dear Parent/Carer

Welcome to the new academic year. We have welcomed 190 new Year 7 students into the school last week and I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Year 7 parents to the Robert Napier community. I would also like to congratulate Year 7 on an excellent start so far in relation to their behaviour, efforts and courtesy around school. ***Please see the last section of this newsletter regarding one of our new students.***

## Examination Results

While we achieved our best ever results in Year 13, we were very disappointed with the GCSE results this summer. Although our English results were very strong, our Maths results were hit by the instability of staffing over the last 5 years. The mathematical foundations in the rising years are much stronger, but with further improvements still needed. Therefore, we have had to reflect on what else we need to do, and we have made some far-reaching changes in our approach – see details below.

## Behaviour and Standards

Behaviour has improved over the last 2 years and, as I wrote in my last newsletter, we will be tightening this even further this year. We are basing our 'Behaviour for Learning' standards on the attached non-negotiables. There are three key changes:

- Authority of professionals
- Classroom expectations
- Rapid movements around the school

The first is the basic premise that, as education professionals, we must always have absolute authority in our school. When adults do not have authority in the classroom, there is a power vacuum that is filled by the students. If a student is controlling the classroom, it is highly unlikely their goal is to improve their classmates' long-term life chances. As adults and educational professionals, we know what is best for the long-term life chances of students, and the expectations we have set on our return this week are incredibly high and demanding. For some students it will be a struggle initially to live up to these expectations, particularly after a summer break. Secondly, we have set five very clear classroom expectations for all students, at all times, which make up the acronym SLANT:

- **S**it up straight,
- **L**isten carefully at all times
- **A**nswer questions,
- **N**ever interrupt, and
- **T**rack the teacher (or text or speaker)

Thirdly, we want to gain learning time from more efficient movements around the school. If a student loses 5 minutes per lesson from slow changeovers to lessons, this is the equivalent to 16 weeks of schooling lost between Year 7 to Year 11. We want to gain much of that 16 weeks back.

To take the school forward, we need our school to have no variation in the quality of the learning experience or in the behavioural expectations across all of our staff. This week we have communicated to students and staff a system which will set out to achieve a state of excellence with consistently compliant, motivated and attentive behaviour. A crucial component in creating this culture is for us all to '**row together**'. We need you, as parents, to demand of your children only the best behaviour and, in order to meet our focus on behaviour, will require your 100% commitment to create an environment where you believe that they can achieve. In recent months I have heard too many comments from parents which show that they do not always believe their children can achieve the goals they set themselves. Additionally, if the school 'rows' alone without consistency from home, this leads to dents in the relationships between the school and the student, when home have different standards. Please read the Behaviour for Learning – Non Negotiable Standards below with your child.

## Homework and Knowledge Testing

We have concluded from our initial analysis of the GCSE results, and our evaluation of progress last year, that many students' factual knowledge in subjects needs to improve, as well as their basic arithmetic. With the content heavy nature of new exam specifications, the removal of coursework and the significant extra challenge in Maths and English, we will need to focus on the following:

- Knowledge building strategies and testing in every lesson – each lesson will start with a quiz on the previous lesson's work or based on the homework learning
- Every day students will do 1.5 hours of homework:
  - 30 minutes of knowledge learning and self-quizzing using a knowledge booklet. The expectation is that students do two A4 pages of practice self-quizzing on knowledge recall from the subject specified on the homework timetable. Both the homework timetable and the knowledge booklet will come home next week.
  - 30 minutes of Mathematics (a mixture of [www.mymaths.co.uk](http://www.mymaths.co.uk) / [www.completemaths.com/](http://www.completemaths.com/) and paper based work).
  - 30 minutes of reading each night.

This will be the minimum required, and it is an expectation that Year 7s are starting their 5-year revision plan towards GCSE from their first days in school. Sadly, I know this 11 hours of homework a week will come as a shock to some students, and a number of them will shy away from it, but we will be reminding them that completing it will improve their life chances. Non-completion of homework will result in a sanction.

**We are currently considering the idea of same day homework detentions. You would be notified via our InTouch messaging service on the day the homework was not completed, and a detention would be for that evening (students would not be expected to stay later than 4pm). We would like to consult with you on this idea therefore, if you have any views that you would like the School to consider in relation to the concept of same day detentions, please e-mail my PA, Mrs Mallion at [pmallion@robertnapier.org.uk](mailto:pmallion@robertnapier.org.uk) or send in your comments marked for the attention of the Headteacher by midday on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2017.** Our philosophy is that we need to be tough to be kind to ensure that the long term prospects of our students increase. Like the behaviour changes above, it is crucial that you support your child to complete this homework. The school runs homework club for any students that want to stay behind to get ahead with some of this work.

## Attendance matters!

Please ensure we start the year with excellent attendance and be reminded that holidays will not be authorised unless the reason is exceptional. I want us to aim for a very challenging 95% this year – I will update you in Term 2 with our running attendance total. Please continue to notify the school with any absence before 9.00am on the day of absence.

## Awards Evening

Awards Evening invites have just been sent out, so if your son or daughter is one of the lucky ones, please ensure you keep Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> September free and reply promptly to the letter to confirm attendance. Last year's event was spectacular and we look forward to a similar quality of evening this year.

## Measles, Chicken Pox and Shingles

Please may we ask for your co-operation in a very important matter. One of our new students is receiving medical treatment for cancer, which puts them at risk if they are exposed to measles, chicken pox or shingles. Please let us know immediately if your child is suspected of having measles. Our student is at risk from chicken pox and would need to be given an injection within three days of contact, so if your child is suspected of having chicken pox, you should let us know. It is also important that you let us know if there is shingles in your household. Your child is not at any risk whatsoever from this situation, however, the health and wellbeing of the student at risk does depend on the co-operation of all other parents and we hope you can help us.

Yours faithfully



Andrew Minchin  
Headteacher



## Behaviour for Learning – Non Negotiable Standards

As students of Robert Napier, we will work very hard to make behaviour in our school outstanding by following the recipe for success which students and staff created:

1. All Robert Napier Students will respect the authority of the adults in the school:
  - a. Adults' instructions must be followed without question
  - b. We should accept consequences of our own actions without argument
  - c. We will respect the time and effort put into marking and planning of lessons, showing our appreciation to teacher for this
2. All Robert Napier students should show a readiness for learning at all times:
  - a. We will be properly equipped and will have planners, books, knowledge booklets and equipment on the table ready for learning
  - b. We will take pride in our work and produce our best at all times
  - c. We will not use mobile phones in lessons unless asked to
  - d. All of us will follow the SLANT process in all lessons to support our learning:
    - Sit up straight,
    - Listen,
    - Answer questions,
    - Never interrupt and
    - Track the teacher (or text or speaker)
3. All Robert Napier students should move through the school quickly and in an orderly manner:
  - a. We will be punctual to school and to lessons and ready to start learning straight away
  - b. Changeover of lessons should be within 2 minutes – seat to seat and in silence inside the school building
  - c. Everyone in the school should walk on the left side of corridors in single file if necessary
  - d. We should ensure no student feels unsafe by our own actions
4. All Robert Napier students should be well mannered at all times:
  - a. We should open doors for each other and for guests
  - b. We should speak to staff and to each other with respect and courtesy at all times
  - c. We should not swear in any part of our conversations with staff or other students
  - d. We should challenge poor manners and actively model the correct behaviours to younger students
5. All Robert Napier students should present themselves in the correct uniform at all times:
  - a. We will avoid confrontation with staff by wearing the correct uniform
  - b. We will represent the school to high standard by wearing a uniform with pride to and from school.
6. The school community should be a clean, safe and calm environment for us all.
  - a. We will challenge others that drop litter, both in our school and in our local community
  - b. We will never eat chewing gum or drink fizzy or high energy drinks
  - c. We will never participate in any form of anti-social behaviour
  - d. We will show kindness to each other and will not intimidate or threaten other students through our direct or indirect actions
7. All Robert Napier students and staff should support each other and the school to **consistently** achieve the six areas above.