S1

Dear Parent/Carer

There are often many questions and concerns when a child moves from primary to secondary school. It is to be hoped that this information about the work your child will undertake in English this year will answer some of those questions. As English is a core subject your child will attend for 4 periods a week and in order to maintain and further the progress made in primary school, parental awareness and support is crucial.

The period between S1 and the end of S3 is referred to as the Broad General Education. S1 pupils are engaged in working through a Curriculum for Excellence at or towards level 3. The majority of pupils should be able to achieve level 3 by the end of S3 with some going on to achieve level 4 in S3.

In class pupils are encouraged to work on improving their skills in reading, writing, talking and listening as well as in home-studying and are assessed at appropriate points in the session when teaching and learning has taken place.

In S1 and S2, pupils are in mixed ability classes and a variety of flexible teaching methods ensure that the differing needs of pupils are met. At Strathaven Academy, staff make use of formative assessment and active learning strategies to support and develop the accrual of skills. Pupils are encouraged to achieve their personal best, to work independently and to develop study skills as well as to reflect on their strengths and to set personal targets to meet their development needs.

Class work is augmented by regular homework tasks. The good habits that homework develops should be highly regarded and to achieve the most from these exercises pupils should complete the exercises on time and to the best of their ability. Pupils are given an appropriate amount of time to complete each exercise. If homework is not completed on time this is logged by the teacher and a new date is issued. If this second date is not met then the matter is referred to the Principal Teacher. Any problems encountered by pupils should be directed to the class teacher **prior** to the date the homework is due.

Homework tasks are usually linked to personal reading or current course work but should also help your child to develop good study habits. Please see our Homework Policy document for more information.

In addition to regular homework exercises pupils are expected to be reading every day and working towards their Literacy Challenge. Numerous educational studies point to the link between a regular reading habit and educational improvement. Pupils are given time to read in class every period and are therefore expected to bring a book with them every day. Pupils are encouraged to borrow books from the school and class libraries or to bring books from home or the local library. A reading partner at home can be a good idea to build regular positive reading habits. Reading together, having your child read aloud to you or discussing the book’s themes and characters can be very effective ways of supporting your child’s reading and developing their English skills.

Should we have any concerns about the progress your child is making the department will keep you informed.

The advice issued at the P7 Information Evening about how you can support your child at home as well as suggested booklists and resources are available on the English pages of the Strathaven Academy website. We look forward to working with you and your child over the coming years and to meeting you at the Parent Consultation Evening later in the session.

In the meantime, should you have any concerns or questions please do not hesitate to contact me on 01357 524040.

Yours sincerely

HELEN BRADSHAW

Faculty Head of English, Literacy and Drama

Pupils can enhance their chances of success by:

* **Being organised** – keeping all notes and help sheets and corrected work together for studying purposes
* **Attending** every class
* Meeting **all** **deadlines**. Deadlines are given well in advance and should not be left until the last minute
* READING – reading novels, short stories, non-fiction but especially good **quality journalism from broadsheet newspapers** such as The Herald or The Guardian
* Practising applying Close Reading skills to newspaper articles and past papers
* Learning, revising and practising Close Reading question types
* Making lots of detailed, good quality notes
* Regularly revising notes, quotes, plans for all exam texts studied.
* Using Past Paper questions (provided) to revise and practise critical essay skills by writing relevant plans and introductions
* Giving adequate time, care and attention to folio pieces and talk assignments
* Participating in lessons and contributing to discussion
* Checking over all written work for spelling, sentencing, punctuation and expression errors as **technical English** needs to be consistently accurate
* Identifying and addressing weaknesses and errors either on their own, using material given by the class teacher designed to help or by approaching the class teacher.

**What you can do to support your child**

Learning is effective only when all 3 parties: teacher, parent and pupil work well together. By supporting what happens in school at home parents can significantly enhance and enrich the learning process.

* Research indicates that positive parental attitudes to homework can have a marked impact on performance so take an interest in what your child is doing, encourage them.
* Actively encourage your son/daughter to read every day
* Discuss what they are reading at school/home with them – the plot, characters, what they liked or didn’t like and why, how the text made them feel, what it reminded them of or made them think about, the theme/purpose, the tone or attitude expressed by the writer
* Discuss topical issues in the news
* Check their work and encourage them to take pride in it.
* Encourage them to discuss their strengths and weaknesses and to come up with positive next steps
* Encourage them to talk about what they are learning in English
* Allow them to practise and prepare solo presentations with you as the audience! Provide them with constructive feedback about how to improve
* Encourage them to see failure as neither negative or disheartening but as an essential part of the learning process
* Praise the process of learning. Reward for effort not just result.
* Ensure your child is an active learner: they should be **doing** not just reading
* Encourage your child to regularly review what has been learned so far – there is never ‘nothing to do’.
* Encourage your child to look at how much they are improving on their own previous results NOT in comparison with other pupils.