S3

Dear Parent/Carer

We are pleased to welcome your child to English in S3. As you are no doubt already aware, S3 pupils are engaged in working through Curriculum for Excellence at National Level 3 or 4. This is often referred to as the Broad General Education.

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 S1 and S2, parental awareness and support is crucial. It is hoped that each pupil will have a productive year and will be motivated to reach his or her potential in readiness for a move to Nationals in S4.

This year pupils have been grouped into broadly banded sections based on their performance and engagement in S2 to prepare, support and challenge pupils in readiness for presentation at National 4 or National 5 Level in S4. Final decisions about presentation will be based on progress this session as well as on the S3 exams and national standardised assessments which will take place after Easter 2020.

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. Pupils will be encouraged to achieve their personal best, to work independently and develop study skills as well as to reflect on their strengths and to set personal targets to meet their development needs. Staff make use of formative assessment and active learning strategies to support and develop the acquisition and development of skills.

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 should be directed to the class teacher **prior** to the date the homework is due.

Homework tasks are usually linked to personal reading and current course work but may also provide essential practice in the basic English skills and should also help your child to develop good study habits. In S3, tasks may include: revision of previous work; completion of class work; redrafting; reading for preparation or information; researching to supplement class work; use of multi-media; preparation of solo or group presentation. Completion of homework should always be checked by staff and marked in a fashion as appropriate to the task: self-marking; peer marking; teacher-led class marking or teacher correction. Please refer to our English and Drama Homework Policy document for more information.

In English pupils always have work to be getting on with productively at home. In addition to regular homework exercises pupils are expected to be reading every day and working through their Literacy Challenge booklet. Numerous educational studies point to the link between a regular reading habit and educational improvement. Pupils preparing for National 5 in particular *must* be reading quality journalism on a regular basis.

Should we have any concerns about the progress your child is making the department will keep you informed. Attached is advice for pupils on how to do well this session and on how you can support your child at home. There are also booklists and resources available on the English pages of the Strathaven Academy website.

We look forward to working with you and your child over the coming year 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.