

# Parent Update

## Focus School Stoke Poges Campus

### Week Ending: 18th September 2015

#### Preparing our students to learn

As we move into the core purpose of learning, staff have worked hard to ensure your sons and daughters are equipped to learn. We understand the transition from Year 6 to 7 is a big one. To help our new Year 7, students in Year 8, Shameem Akhtar and Caroline Corio have developed a range of support materials.

Year 8 with Shameem Akhtar, have created a learning guide drawing on their own experiences, offering advice of how to manage the new work load, organise their time to good effect and offered useful tips in how to learn best.

Caroline Corio has been working with myself to develop a **'Learning to Learn' programme** that will be taught in Year 7's SDL lesson over the first term. Students will complete a range of tasks that focus on the key skills needed to learn. I hope this will help our year 7's gain confidence in their learning and the strategies to manage this important step of their education.



#### Accelerated Learning Programme Parent Invite

I would like to remind **parents that you are invited** to attend the second training day **on Friday 25th September. The presentation will start at 1.15 pm** and Karim Al-Abbas from 'Enlighten Education'. He will introduce you to the 'Accelerated Learning' Programme and help you understand how to support your children get the best out of their learning. I am positive you will find this event informative and useful. Please confirm if you wish to attend by email to [heather.tucker@focus-school.com](mailto:heather.tucker@focus-school.com)

#### The CAP program

This week it was a pleasure for the school to host the **Academic Career Team's** launch of the **CAP** programme for Post 16. I'm still slightly in awe at the support our students are given by the many individuals who give up their time freely. A special mention to Steve Abernethie and Ross Robertson in successfully leading such a mammoth undertaking, co-ordinating mentors, establishing a purposeful programme and delivering an effective evening of mentoring. However, I think our students' words can convey what this program means to them more than my own.

"During the course of my next 2 years at school, I am taking part in the CAP programme. Not only is it a privilege to be taking a tertiary course before we have finished school, but also to be backed by a business, where we will be able to work during school holidays in order to gain experience, so we are able to hit the workplace running". **Georgia Roy**

"I am glad to be part of this new CAP programme. My meeting on Tuesday night with my host employer went very well. We discussed what type of work I will be doing on work placement and my hourly commitment per week on the course. I am looking forward to working with my sponsor and mentor to fulfil the course". **Junior Lyon**

"The meeting I had with my host employer gave me a fresh burst of enthusiasm and inspiration, as I could see this invigorating program coming into force – having been looking forward to it for so long. So good times ahead is all I say... ". **Brandon Abernethie**

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### The FLN Programme Post 16

As you will be aware the Trust has organised a range of courses that are taught through VC from Exchange Place. These courses differ greatly from previous VC lessons. Students have a dedicated teacher, pre-recorded lessons and assignments to access via Moodle to support their learning. The teaching model used to enable students to learn is called a 'Flipped' and 'Blended' model. It works very similarly to distance learning for adults and many university courses.



Students are asked to research, read and explore a range of resources prior to the lesson, so they are prepared to learn and engage with their teacher on VC. The term 'Blended' is used to describe the wide range of resources they can use to support their understanding. This is a move away from the traditional classroom where teachers deliver the content, to students discovering the content for themselves with guided resources, hence the term 'Flip'. Greg, one of year 12 AS Law students studying through FLN has generously agreed to share his thoughts about the learning experience on his FLN course.

"Recently we (A-level Law students) have been enrolled on the FLN course which stands for Focus Learning Network: an online Law course based on a mix of SDL and Video Conferencing lessons. This course is a dramatic change to the usual run-of-the-mill lessons. Instead of the teacher trying to ram as much information down your throat as possible in one lesson, students have access to a wide variety of resources provided by the teacher including videos, reading and problem-based scenarios. All of this is done in your own time allowing you to digest it all and then gives you the chance for the teacher to assess and discuss your knowledge of the subject in the VC lessons. This is proving to be a good course and we are all enjoying it so far." **Greg Bodman**

### Behaviour for Learning

Back in June when I initially joined the school, students, staff and trustees commented on the need to have a behaviour system that was fair and consistently implemented across the school. Over the past two weeks I have worked with teachers, the students' council and the Campus Management Team to develop a working sanctions and rewards system that works for everyone. I have attached the flow chart designed as a result of these discussions along with our revamped reward system.

We will be launching the system from next week but I would welcome any comments or concerns you may have about our system. Rewards are a very important part of encouraging and recognising students' efforts in their learning and we are looking forward to celebrating students achievements through our rewards system and in assemblies.

### Moodle

Moodle is our Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). It is a secure website where staff can place resources and activities for students to log in and complete. The beauty of Moodle is that the physical location of the staff or students isn't important as everyone can access it from anywhere in the world. For each lesson that students take in school or via VC (video conferencing) there is a secure course which is organised by their teacher and can only be accessed by their class. Staff are able to upload all types of resources to further students' learning and students in return are also able to upload their homework for teachers to mark. All of these features are being developed at Stoke Poges with staff and students alike. Over this coming academic year you should hear and see a lot more of Moodle. **Jen Cauldrelier**



### European Driving License

We are beginning the process of piloting and becoming a centre that can teach and examine the European Computer Driving License. This is a recognised qualification that teaches students essential computer skills for use within business. With the support of Graham Poole we aim to launch this programme with students as soon as possible.

**Jen Cauldrelier**

### Focus of the Week beginning 11<sup>th</sup> September 2015

This week's learning focus for students was to use their SDL time to good effect. Despite a few Moodle teething problems, our students have registered with Ali to record the work they intend to focus on and then set to their work. The open



area has been calm, work focused and students have been accessing learning materials online. I think we can all admit it is difficult at times to organise our own work and keep on task. Using their SDL time productively not only enables students to succeed academically but helps build those key skills of, self-resilience and scheduling their time efficiently. Please encourage your sons and daughters to keep up their self-discipline when working independently; they will reap the rewards in due time.



### Key Dates for the diary

- SDL (Self Directed Learning) Student Training – 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2015
- CAP Student Mentoring Day – 24<sup>th</sup> September 2015
- **Self-Directed Learning Parent Event 1.15-2.55pm– 25<sup>th</sup> September 2015**
- Extended school day – Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2015
- **Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> October 3:00-5:0pm Year 7 and Year 8 Parents' evening**
- Extended school day – Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2015
- Extended school day – Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> October
- Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> October – Regional Inset Day
- House Music 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2015
- UK Senior Maths Challenge – 5<sup>th</sup> November 2015
- Prizegiving/ Motivational Awards Event – 6<sup>th</sup> November 2015

Wishing you a warm and happy weekend with your family and friends

**Sarah Hutt**  
Headteacher

**Attachments:** Behaviour for Learning Flow Chart  
Reward System