Dear Students, Parents and Carers,

Welcome to General Education at Myerscough. We are looking forward to working with you from September and thought we would touch base and answer a few questions before they arise. My name is Mandy Kemp, I have met most of you at interview and I teach two GCSE groups, supervise the science which is new this year and also oversee the groups in the 14-16 cohort covered by the General Education Department.

You may be registered for a number of different courses and so it is important you know how to prepare yourselves for each of them over the summer. All our courses use the Edexcel exam board. The functional skills courses are levelled for different abilities. We offer Entry Level 2, Entry Level 3 and Level 1, these are the main stepping stones to GCSE. We hold functional skills assessments throughout the year and so students can retake a level several times throughout the year and may even take two levels if we feel it is appropriate.

The GCSE courses are both Grade 9-1 courses. We deliver English Language (9-1) and Mathematics (9-1). The English students all sit the same two papers and the higher grades are awarded on merit. The Maths students sit either Foundation or Higher level papers and the grade they are awarded is determined by the level of paper they take. Foundation students can get a grade 1 – 5 with a 4 being the recognised pass grade whereas Higher students can get grades 3 – 9, with 4 again being the recognised pass rate. Grade 1 is the lowest awarded grade, Grade 9 the highest. All Maths students sit three papers. We, in discussion with students and their families/carers, make the decision about the level of Maths paper an individual works towards. Students working towards a Grade 4 or 5 are more likely to achieve this from the Foundation than the Higher paper.

This year we are offering a pilot scheme for GCSE biology and chemistry as separate sciences, again this is the 9-1 syllabus. There are two tiers of paper, Foundation and Higher and levels will be decided during assessments in December. We are studying the Edexcel GCSE syllabus for biology and chemistry. This cohort is full. Further spaces are planned for September 2020.

We do not ask students to get a text book, we can provide most of what would be included in one anyway. It would however be really helpful if students could purchase the CGP revision guides and workbooks for their specific course. Remember the English department are following the Edexcel English Language (9-1) and maths are following the Edexcel mathematics course – either higher or foundation. We also recommend the Edexcel revision guides and workbooks which are different to the CGP books but equally useful. Please ensure these are the 9-1 books as there are plenty of old scheme second hand text books available for sale. The 9-1 books can be purchased second hand from Amazon very cheaply.

There isn’t a science textbook we would recommend but again the revision guides from CGP would be extremely useful.

Please ensure your child is fully equipped for studying. We are reluctant to hand out pens as it costs us so much over the year so please can you make sure they all have pens, pencils, coloured pencils or pens and highlighters. In addition we would ask that students have access to a calculator at home and obviously a geometry set so they can practice the skills we are teaching. The Edexcel board suggest using a Casio scientific calculator Casio fx-83GT PLUS or the newer version Casio fx-85GT X. We provide exercise books and graph paper but students must provide a file to store their work which must be brought in for each session. If this is the case then we would ask they bring in their own file paper (we do provide specialist papers such as graph paper). Science students will be given a lab practical workbook and an exercise book but will again need to provide a file and paper. All science students need to provide their own clearly named lab coat. These are readily available online and in some school clothing shops. We recommend something in the style of the *Proglam Lab Coat* found on Amazon although it does not need to be purchased through this site.

It is daunting attending college for the first time but if students prepare themselves those first few weeks won’t be so difficult. English teachers suggest all students try and read a newspaper regularly and start to analyse the text in articles, looking for intended audience and bias and investigating new vocabulary. Science students might also benefit from reading a newspaper or scientific journal occasionally. Maths students should use maths whenever they can, particularly practicing adding up shopping and working out change before paying; measuring and converting between currencies. If any student wants to go further then using the revision guides will help.

Please remember we are condensing 2½ - 3 years of work into 9 months and so it is imperative that students plan to work further on topics outside of college if they are to achieve. Tutors will set homework and there will be work on Canvas (College online learning portal) as well as topics students are advised to look at for themselves. Students must have internet access outside of College. Students can access the College library at any time not just on their delivery days if they wish to use the college computers. Obtaining the Functional skills and GCSEs is hard work but worth the effort and I wish every one of this wonderful cohort every success in 2020.

I am available for some of the summer break if you would like to contact me to discuss any aspect of the programme.

Mandy Kemp and the Gen Ed Team

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