

ABBHEY COLLEGE

Abbey Road, Ramsey

Headteacher—Mr Christoforou



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Headteacher's Message



Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome back. As we move into the countdown period to the examinations, it's important that over the next few weeks, I share parent's tips on how you can support your son or daughter during this demanding time.

By way of a reminder, parents can play several roles:

- Attendance officer – making sure your child has 100% attendance and understands the importance of making the most of lesson-times.
- Provider of the tools for homework and revision – a quiet space, a 'workbox' of pens, paper and other necessities.
- Banker – paying for the tools, files and revision guides they need.
- Study buddy – showing an interest in the subject, helping with homework (but not doing it for them), testing them when they ask you.
- Entertainments officer – finding out about TV programmes, theatre productions, films, exhibitions relevant to your child's learning and enjoying them together.
- Sounding board and adviser – helping your child to break tasks down so that they are manageable, keeping a subtle eye on progress, celebrating achievements, and seeing a positive way forward when things go badly.
- Project manager – agreeing the rules for homework or revision (they won't work if they're imposed), helping them to make a realistic timetable, balancing work against the 'fun stuff' and revising the plans as

necessary.

Finally, next week I hope to share more information regarding our recent Ofsted visit as promised.

Key Information for Year 11

In the next week we will be sending you information about;

- Dress For Success Day – 13th May
- An additional ICT GCSE on offer (ECDL) - 20th-24th June
- Planned revisiting learning programme in school during the exam period
- Evening and Saturday revisiting learning sessions
- Exam preparation period – date from when some students may be on study leave
- Early finish days on Friday 27th May and Friday 17th June (except BTEC students if assignments not complete)
- Students' completion of BTEC assignments
- Returning books/revision materials/meeting all BTEC deadlines and therefore earning release from school (from 17th June onwards depending on completion)

Parent Surgery

As part of our ongoing plans to further improve our communication with parents and carers, we are holding our first Parent Surgery on 18th April 2016.

Unfortunately all the April slots have been booked, but on Tuesday 19th April Mrs Johnson (SLT PA) will be sending out a letter with 6 allotted times for May's Parent Surgery.

What's going on in the classroom?

New!

We are very keen to communicate with parents about **teaching & learning** at Abbey College. This new **teaching & learning** update will give you a better understanding of what is going on in lessons. Remember, you can **ask a question** via our communication blog on the website, under 'Parents/Carers' if you want to know more about what happens with teaching & learning.

Last week: Success Criteria

This week: Literacy

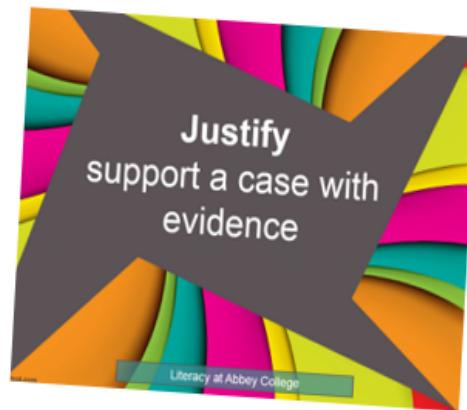
At Abbey College we use '**Burning Imperatives**' which are collaborative goals aimed to introduce new or different ideas across the school. Previous Burning Imperatives have included 'The Big Mark' and 'The Big Self Mark', Challenge and Choice in lessons and Independent Learning.

On Monday, our new Burning Imperative begins. Teachers will be promoting **key assessment or exam words** with all students. Sometimes, our students have a good amount of knowledge, ready to get down on paper. However, the question they are faced with can sometimes confuse them:

What does it mean to 'analyse'?

What does an 'explanation' need to include?

How might I structure an 'evaluation'?



So every teacher, in every class, at every relevant moment will use these key words to open a discussion about what they really mean, and how when faced with them in exam conditions, students can tackle them confidently to achieve the very best grade.

You can **support at home** by asking your child which words they have looked in lessons that week, or by helping them to break down exam questions which are set for learning development.

Abbey College Uniform Update



Just over two months ago representatives from the student body joined the Senior Leadership Team at Abbey College to discuss student views on their uniform. They wanted clarification on the current expectations but also wanted to express their view on a possible change of the uniform worn by all students. They wanted a uniform they would be proud to wear, not only at school but to a future interview. They wanted a uniform that was more aspirational and smart.

As a result the Senior Leadership Team enlisted Sophie, Emily and Chloe (students in 9) to recruit a representative group of students to begin a Uniform Committee. The team have since met at least once a week, consulted the entire current student body in assemblies, demonstrated the possibilities at break and lunch time and met with representative from the Governing Body. Ms McCrory has been in constant communication with the manager of School Plus and researched best price and quality from all suppliers.

We are pleased to announce a unanimous decision to change the Abbey College uniform to something smarter by students, school staff and the Governors.

For more details please refer to the letter sent 15/04/16.

Mobile Phones



We have been made aware that parents and students are still using their mobile phones as a means of

contacting each other during the school day. As a result, we would like to remind you of our Mobile Phone school Policy : **Mobile phones and portable music players should not be seen in any area of the College from 8:40am through to 3.10pm after which they can be used outside a school building only until 3.30pm.**

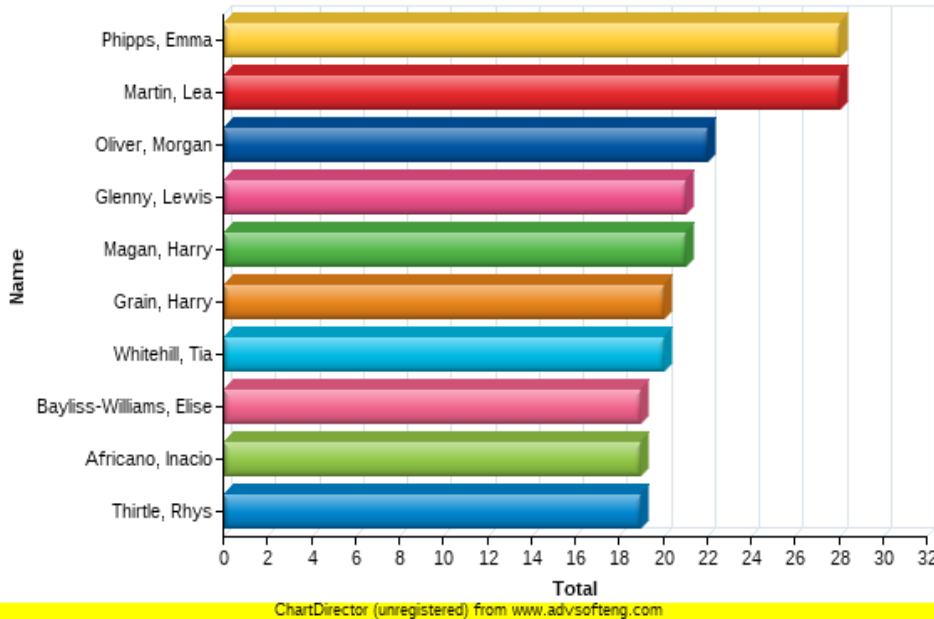
If any phone or MP3 player are visible or audible, they will be confiscated. Students will be able to collect items from Student Services at 3.10pm. However, students who **are confrontational** may have items confiscated and held in school until parents/**carers** are able to come in to retrieve the item. The school is at liberty to keep confiscated items until they see fit to return them and this is based on whether the item was used inappropriately and the frequency of use. Thank you for your cooperation.

This week's Most Vivos! Well done!

National Careers Service (NCS)

Miles Davies from Cambridgeshire County Council is coming to Abbey College on Wednesday 27th April at 7.30pm until 8.00pm/8.15pm to talk about the help NCS can offer, especially in respect to the website, resources and careers tools available for career progression/direction.

If you would like to attend this talk please contact Lesley Pollard, Adult Learning Manager on 01486 812352 (lesley.pollard@abbeycollege.cambs.sch.uk)



ChartDirector (unregistered) from www.advsofteng.com

Parent Voice

Prior to the Easter break, we communicated with you outcomes from the 'open text box' survey which many parents used earlier in the year. We shared our **positive parental comments** and **addressed common concerns**.

As a result of your comments, the following happened:

- A new 'contact the teacher' feature was added to our website so you can email teachers directly.
- We surveyed parents about setting learning development in school holidays. We had 81 responses. As a result, no learning development is set for years 7 and 8 during school holidays.
- We surveyed parents about the frequency of the newsletter. 64% of parents said they would like to keep it weekly. So that's what we have done.



If you would like to ask a question, or want us to review or change something, then please use our '**Communication Blog**' which is available on our website under 'Parents/Carers'.

We hope to have some exciting news regarding Parents to share with you in the next half term.

Key Dates

Monday 18th April	Parent Surgery
Thursday 28th April	Maths Challenge
Monday 9th May	Year 10 Parent's Evening

