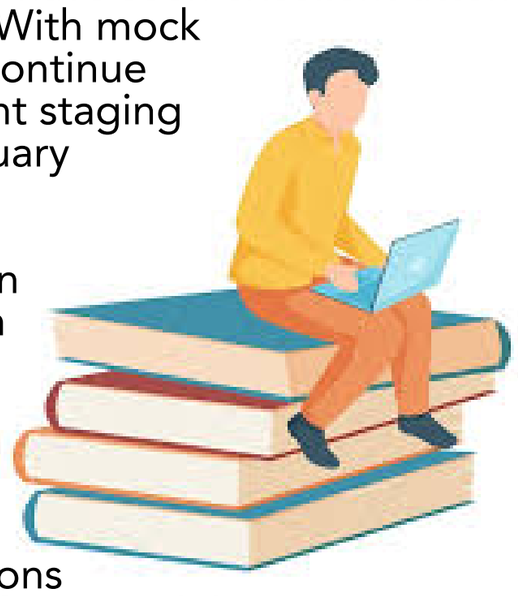
# FAMILIES BULLETIN
# 6th February

## Year 11 February Half term Revision 'Menu'

Our Year 11 students have now developed strong study habits. Since January, we have seen excellent attendance at after-school sessions, and many students are building effective revision routines. With mock exams approaching in March, we want to maintain this positive momentum and continue supporting your child as they prepare. The March Mock Exams act as an important staging post ahead of the final exams, and the revision opportunities available over February half term will be the next step on their journey to success.



For the past two years, we have run a highly successful February half-term revision programme. This year's programme has again been designed in consultation with Year 11 students. Your child should use the programme to **enhance** their independent revision at home. They are **not** expected to attend every session; instead, they should treat it as a **'menu'** of options and choose the sessions that will be most beneficial for them.

We encourage you to look through it together with your child, highlight the sessions they plan to attend, and agree how they will use the rest of their time during half term. While we expect students to set aside time for revision, it is equally important that they make time to relax and spend time with friends and family. With your support in planning ahead, your child can achieve a healthy balance over the break.

A hard copy of the **March Mock Exam timetable** will be posted home shortly and will also be available on the Year 11 page of the school website by Friday 13th February —please keep an eye out.

Families can view a sample of the **'menu'** below and use the following link to see the full offer: Year 11 Parent Page

If you need any help or guidance, please do not hesitate to contact your child's subject teachers, Mr Dalby (Head of Year 11), or me.

Mr Drumm
**Assistant Headteacher - KS4**



## Year 11 "Half Term Menu"



| Subject | Staff | Session Focus | Date / Time |
|---|---|---|---|
| Business Studies | Mr Ullah | Understanding Business Paper 2 | Monday 16 February 10:00am – 11:30am |
| Mathematics | Mrs Adodo | Box, Plots, Histograms | Monday 16 February 10:00am – 11:30am |
| Mathematics | Mr John | Ratio and Proportion | Monday 16 February 10:00am – 11:30am |
| Mathematics | Mr Muktadir | Non-calculator paper practice | Monday 16 February 10:00am – 11:30am |
| Business Studies | Mr Ullah | Understanding Business Paper 1 | Monday 16 February 12:00pm – 1:30pm |
| Mathematics | Mr John | Ratio and Proportion | Monday 16 February 12:00pm – 1:30pm |
| Mathematics | Mr Muktadir | Non-calculator paper practice | Monday 16 February 12:00pm – 1:30pm |
| Art | Ms Butler | Component 2 - Exam | Tuesday 17 February 10:00am – 11:30am |
| English Language | Mrs Donaghy | Understanding Language Paper 2 | Tuesday 17 February 10:00am – 11:30am |

## Upcoming Key Dates

| Date | Event | Year Group | Timings |
|---|---|---|---|
| Monday 16th February - Friday 20th February | February Half-Term | All Year Groups | All Day |
| Monday 23rd February - Friday 6th March | Year 10 Work Experience | Year 10 | 2 Weeks |
| Monday 2nd March - Friday 13th March | Year 11 March Mock Exams | Year 11 | Various |
| Thursday 5th March | Year 7 Parents' Evening | Year 7 | 4:00pm - 7:00pm |
| Wednesday 11th March | Year 12 Interviews | Year 11 | 3:30pm - 6:00pm |
| Thursday 12th March | Year 10 Parents' Evening | Year 10 | 4:00pm - 7:00pm |
| Wednesday 18th March | INSET Day (School Closed) | All | All Day |
| Friday 27th March | INSET Day (School Closed) | All | All Day |
| Monday 30th March - Friday 10th April | Easter Break | All Year Groups | All Day |

## Fidgets in Lessons – Information for Families

We would like to share guidance with families about the use of fidgets in lessons, and our expectations for their appropriate use in school.

Evidence suggests that fidget toys can enhance cognitive performance and help maintain attention, particularly for people with ADD or ADHD (Grodner, 20151). As long as fidgeting movements are small and "mindless", pupils may concentrate on demanding tasks for longer and more efficiently than those who try to suppress the urge to move. However, larger or more complex movements can reduce attention, so fidgets need to be small and easy to manipulate to be helpful (e.g., spinners, cubes, stress balls).

At RGTS, we are fully supportive of all our pupils. We recognise that some students, including those with SEND, may use a fidget as a learning support tool. When used appropriately, fidgets can support concentration, emotional regulation, sensory needs, or help manage anxiety—enabling pupils to engage more effectively with learning.

For learning to be effective and lead to strong outcomes (2) , pupils need to maintain full attention3. Through our reviews of teaching and learning, we have found that the presence of multiple disruptive fidget toys is not aligned with our strategic pedagogical priorities of disruption-free learning (4).

**From Monday 9 February, we will only allow the following items in lessons:**

Appropriate fidgets for lessons include:

· Stress or squeeze balls
· Small amounts of putty or Blu Tack
· Smooth stones or textured handheld items
· Simple, silent silicone or rubber fidget

**Not appropriate for lessons:**

· Slime
· Noisy or light-up items
· Novelty toys
· Any object that distracts from learning





All fidgets must be used responsibly and for their intended purpose. If a fidget becomes a distraction, staff may ask for it to be put away. The use of fidgets in lessons remains at staff discretion.

**References for further reading:**

1: To fidget or not to fidget: the effect of movement on cognition

2: Tools or Toys? The Effect of Fidget Spinners and Bouncy Bands on the Academic Performance in Children With Varying ADHD-Symptomatology

3:Fidget spinners and other sensory toys are ubiquitous in Australian classrooms, but do they really support learning or do they undermine it?

4: Using fidget spinners may actually impede learning

Thank you for your support in helping us maintain a calm, focused learning environment. If you have any questions or would like to discuss whether a fidget is suitable for your child, please contact the school or the SEND team.

Mrs Adodo
**Assistant Headteacher - SENDCo**

Mr Chmielecki
**Primary Specialist KS2 English/Maths**

## Year 9 Information Evening Follow-Up

Thank you to all families who attended the Year 9 Information Evening yesterday. It was wonderful to see such strong support for this important stage in your child's educational journey. Your engagement plays a vital role in helping students make informed, confident choices as they begin shaping their future pathways.

During the evening, we explored the **purpose and significance of the options process**, highlighting how Year 9 marks a key transition point in preparing students for their GCSE years and beyond. The session provided an overview of how the process works—from understanding recommended pathways to navigating subject choices—and offered families the chance to ask questions, gather insight, and reflect on what will best suit each student's strengths, aspirations, and learning style.

As shared on the night, all families should now have received a letter **outlining the recommended pathway for their child**. This personalised **guidance is designed to support students in selecting subjects that align with their interests while ensuring a balanced and ambitious curriculum**. A copy of the Options Booklet has also been provided, containing detailed information about each subject, course expectations, and further advice to assist with decision-making at home.

For families who were unable to join us, the presentation slides can be accessed here: Year 9 Pathways. Additionally, the letter and Options Booklet distributed on the evening will be posted home so that every family has the information needed to support their child through the options process.

The next stage of the options process will consist of the Year 9 straw poll from Monday next week. Your child will have the opportunity to submit the options they are **initially interested in.** This will be done through Microsoft Forms with the link being shared next week to all students.

We hope you found the evening informative, reassuring, and helpful as you support your child through this exciting stage of their education. If you have any further questions or would like additional guidance, please do not hesitate to contact the school. Our team is here to support every student in making choices that enable them to thrive.

Mr Nott
**Assistant Headteacher - KS4**

## 10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

# SUPPORTING SAFE USE OF AI

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly woven into young people's digital lives. It can offer some educational benefits and day-to-day assistance; however, it also raises concerns about misinformation, privacy, fairness, and safety. This guide provides parents and educators with practical strategies to support young people to navigate AI tools responsibly, and to use them safely and with discernment.

### 1 DEMYSTIFY WHAT AI REALLY IS

Children encounter AI in most online places, including games, streaming platforms, and school tools. Explain that AI uses patterns from past data to make decisions, but it doesn't think or feel like humans. Use age-appropriate examples, like how recommendations on YouTube or Netflix work, to build understanding and prevent false beliefs about AI being all-knowing or alive.

### 2 TALK ABOUT RISKS OF MISINFORMATION

AI can create convincing false information, including deepfake videos, photos, and fake 'facts'. Encourage children to think critically about what they see and read. Teach them to double-check information using reliable sources, to look at images and videos carefully, and to ask an adult if something doesn't seem right.

### 3 DISCUSS DATA AND PRIVACY

Explain that AI systems learn by analysing lots of data, sometimes including personal information. Help young people to be mindful of what they share online and why protecting personal data matters. Model good habits like reading app permissions together or reviewing what's collected by voice assistants like Alexa or Siri.

### 4 ENCOURAGE CREATIVE USE OF AI

Support children, when using AI tools, to explore ideas, make art, or build projects. This fosters confidence, imagination, and independent thinking. When children use AI creatively, rather than just passively consuming it, they are more likely to stay engaged and make thoughtful choices.

### 5 USE AGE-APPROPRIATE AI TOOLS

Not all AI platforms are suitable for children. Choose tools designed for education or creativity, with clear safety policies. Review terms of use and privacy settings, and help children use them in age-appropriate ways. For example, some chatbot tools mimic conversation but should only be used with guidance and boundaries in place.

### 6 USE AI TOGETHER

Exploring AI tools together can help adults understand how they work and spot potential issues. Try co-writing a story with an AI writing assistant or experimenting with an AI art tool. This encourages curiosity, helps you stay informed about the latest AI tools, and allows you to reinforce safe and respectful use while modelling critical thinking.

### 7 SET BOUNDARIES FOR AI USE

Establish when, where, and how AI tools can be used, just as you would with any digital technology. For example, you might agree not to use AI tools to complete school assignments without permission, or to avoid unsupervised use of voice assistants. Consistent boundaries help manage overuse and misuse.

### 8 WATCH FOR OVERRELIANCE

Some AI tools, like homework help apps, may be tempting shortcuts. Encourage children to use AI to support their thinking, not replace it. Celebrate effort and process over perfect answers. Reinforce that mistakes are part of learning and that relying too heavily on AI can limit real understanding.

### 9 TEACH DIGITAL ETHICS AND LITERACY

Help children explore how AI works, where it might be biased, and why ethical thinking matters. Building digital literacy alongside ethical awareness ensures children engage with AI critically, not just conveniently. Help young people to understand that not all people use AI for legitimate purposes; some use it for malicious reasons. Encourage questions about fairness, representation, and who benefits from certain tools; talk about algorithms, echo chambers, and the impact of automation on daily life.

### 10 STAY CURIOUS AND INVOLVED

AI is developing rapidly, and staying informed helps you support the young people in your care. Follow trusted sources for updates and keep the conversation going. If a child brings up a new AI trend or tool, take the opportunity to learn about it together. Showing interest builds trust and strengthens digital resilience.


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# 16-18 YEAR OLD COLLEGE TALENT *ID Events*

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## - UPCOMING 2025/26 TRIAL DATES -

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| TUESDAY 28TH OCTOBER | MONDAY 22ND DECEMBER | TUESDAY 17TH FEBRUARY | TUESDAY 31ST MARCH |
| | TUESDAY 7TH APRIL | TUESDAY 26TH MAY | |

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