

# The Swaminarayan

Education is that which liberates

Dear Parents, Guardians, Pupils and Friends,

## Theme for the week

The theme for next week is “**Money**”. I have written about it on the reverse of the newsletter.

## S2 Parents’ Consultation Evening – Thursday, 9<sup>th</sup> March

Following the Options afternoon, as promised all parents will have a chance to discuss the options with the teachers at the Parents’ Consultation Evening on Thursday, 9<sup>th</sup> March between 4.30-7.00 pm in the Yogi Hall. All the parents will have an opportunity to meet their child’s subject teachers including the House Tutors, who meet the pupils twice daily and keep a very careful eye on their welfare, progress and achievements. This is also a chance to discuss the options with the teachers.

## Planning for the Summer GCSE & A level Examinations

As the external examinations draw near, parents and students should start to plan, prepare and organise themselves for a period of the year which will prove to be challenging for everyone. I have written clear guidance for students and parents. Neither the parents nor the students should take this guidance lightly to ensure everything progresses smoothly.

## Revision and Preparation

### Best ways to prepare and revise for Exams

#### Five Top Tips:

- 1.) Create a structured revision timetable
- 2.) Adopt a positive approach to revision
- 3.) Establish an appropriate study environment
- 4.) Be active with your revision: Visual/Listen/Move
- 5.) Strike a balance between health/work/play

#### Lasting Learning

- Enrich environment
- Engage all senses
- Allow the brain to reflect
- Engage in physical activity
- Interrupt learning with breaks
- Consistent feedback from teachers & peers
- Support from parents
- Generate love of learning
- Relax to Energise

## **Revision Timetable**

### **The key to effective revision is to:**

- Plan revision timetable that is realistic
- Makes sure that all topics are covered
- Treat revision as an 8 hour working day
- Five days per week clearly marked revision slots
- Spend five to six hours revising per day
- Each slot is 45 minutes long
- Short 15 minutes breaks after each slot
- Start early not later than 9 am
- Create time for one hour lunch
- Add a reserve revision slot for challenging topics
- Do past papers under exam conditions
- Review and revisit recent revision to make sure you remember
- Repetition key to success
- Make sure you cover the exam syllabus

## **Play to Relax**

A realistic revision timetable establishes a rhythm to your day. Plan enjoyable activities with friends which allows you to share problems, socialise, which will be helpful to manage stress and anxiety through the revision and exam period; and ultimately make you more productive! Strike a balance between daily revision; eight hours of sleep and nutritional diet with plenty of water

## **Study Environment**

A clutter-free workspace in a quiet part of the house is essential for effective revision. Ensure that all equipment (stationary, textbooks, notes, bottle of water, etc.) is at hand to prevent disruption to your revision sessions. Remove all distractions such as phones, internet enabled devices, magazines, etc. Tell the younger or older siblings to ensure they respect your space and revision period.

## **Revision**

The best revision involves active current engagement with the content; passively reading through textbooks or copying out notes will not ensure a thorough understanding of the subject content. You have access to lots of revision resources given by your teachers. Mostly importantly:

- Establish what you know: by writing out in 'mind-maps' or summary notes about the topic. This will get your brain ready to learn and make you aware of the gaps in knowledge.
- Build you revision: around what you already know about each topic: Memory works best when information is structured, patterned and linked to existing knowledge. This will allow you to make better sense of new information. The more we understand, the less we have to remember by rote.
- Pick out key words or themes: from notes and textbooks. This will aid understanding and frees your memory to learn more. Key phrases, laws and words can be transferred to revision cards and used to recall more challenging concepts.
- Use all your senses: Some pupils will remember best when they have been told facts, others when they have seen them written down. Some recall better when listening to information they have recorded, while others remember facts if they are displayed in a visually appealing way (e.g. diagrams or flow charts). Using a variety of senses keeps revision more engaging and ensures longer lasting recall.

- Test yourself: Answering past paper questions under timed conditions ensures you are familiar with the exam conditions. You can then mark the work using the mark schemes to see what areas of the course needs bolstering. Actively looking for areas where you may lose marks is important and caution must be taken not to be too generous with the marking. Another form of self-assessment is by “teaching” a topic to a friend or obliging family member.
- Predict: When you are feeling confident about a topic you can use the syllabus to come up with different types of questions that could potentially be asked in the exam; the more challenging the better! Then constructing model answers or answering the questions under exam conditions can help you to check your understanding.
- Overlearning and repetition are vital. Revisiting topics regularly reinforces knowledge and ensures the memories are longer lasting. You can use the reserve time at the end of the day to quickly recap on recently covered topics to keep them fresh in your minds.

## **Parents**

- Parents often feel anxious about whether their son/daughter is revising adequately and sufficiently. It is important that you are aware of what is expected of your son/daughter, and that they feel supported and have all their practical needs met in order to revise in a healthy way.
- Your role is essentially to help the pupils achieve the optimal balance between being too relaxed, and suffering too much with anxiety and stress.
- Try not to make too many demands during revision and exam period. Also, try not to expose them to your own anxieties about their exam performance. This can often lead to arguments which will add stress and hinder revision.
- Impress upon them the need to have a clear distinction between revision time and free time. Short intense bursts of effective revision with regular scheduled breaks as explained above is far more effective than long slots half-heartedly skimming notes.
- If you feel that they are overdoing it, then suggest they have a break. It is helpful that they are realistic about what is reasonable and effective. Pupils often lose perspective during revision period. If they seem excessively anxious, remind them that whilst exams are important, their whole life does not depend on them, even though it may seem like it at the moment.
- You can offer help by making store up on paper and other stationary with plenty of healthy snacks in the fridge; by helping them with the timetable which sets a routine to meal times, breaks, etc. A structured routine is essential during revision and examinations. Promoting regular exercise and sufficient sleep will also have a big impact. Go out with them for a walk if that is the only way to get them out for fresh air.

## **Examination Timetables**

You should have a personal copy of your examination timetable, which is available on the Parents Portal.

## **Examination Days**

On the day of the examination try to have a good breakfast/lunch and have plenty of water. Research has shown that this helps with exam performance. Make sure you get to the exam in plenty of time, take deep breaths to relax and ensure you read all the instructions and questions carefully before

answering. Highlight key words or phrases if that helps. After each exam, though it is so tempting, try not to discuss the paper with your peer; it will only make you anxious; be positive and move on to the next exam.

## **Money**

### **Think**

We all need money to survive in this world. It is the reason your parents get up every morning and go to work. It is said the love of money is at the root of all evil and in the wrong hands can cause a lot of sorrow. In the right hands money can do a lot of good and bring happiness to many people all over the world.

### **Feel**

Some people are happy to be able to buy the basic needs to live a good life, while others want to be able to buy all the best things in life. Whenever I ask questions about money to students they always place it as one of their highest priorities in life. Some of them openly admit that they want to live in grand houses with swimming pools, drive the fastest cars, travel first class and have the most luxurious holidays in the most exotic places.

### **Do**

These things are clearly important to some students and may be to you as well. I don't want you to feel guilty over it. I suspect because you wish it, you will be extra focused in your life in order to make sure you achieve that ambition. Whether you are happy to live a simple life or one in the fast lane, money will be needed. While I do not think you should make money the main object of your desire, I do believe you should do everything in your power to make sure you make as much money as you need to make you happy and make a contribution to society. There are a lot of unfortunate people in the world who are not in that position, which is through no fault of their own. If your money can make a difference to them and at the same time allow you to live a happy life there is nothing wrong in earning as much money as you can.

**Yours sincerely,**

**Nilesh Manani**