



EBacc Consultation

After the general election the government announced that they intend to make the "EBacc" compulsory for students currently in Year 7 and those currently in primary school. They have now launched a national consultation on this proposal and are inviting feedback. The Ebacc concept was launched a few years ago and requires students to study GCSEs in English, Maths, Double Science, Geography or History, and a Language. On the face of it this seems like a reasonable package of subjects but Catholic schools have objected from the start that RE is not acceptable as the humanities subject, and that is not changing.

The main objection to this mix of subjects is that it leaves students with only one other subject to choose from a long list, including the arts subjects, business, technology and computing. Neither does it leave room for vocational courses.

I would urge parents to complete an online response to the national consultation. The questions unfortunately assume that this plan will go ahead and are mainly about details of its implementation, but it will still be possible to express views and concerns. A factsheet has been produced for staff and governors and is available from reception for any parent that would like a copy: this might be helpful in responding to the questions.

The more responses that are received the more notice is likely to be taken of them. This combination of subjects will not suit every student and headteachers would prefer it if the choices were left to students, parents and schools rather than being dictated to by government.

Although it only applies to students in Year 7, everyone is able to respond so if you have a view about this plan please do complete a response form.

The response form can be accessed at <https://www.education.gov.uk/consultations/index.cfm?action=Respond&consultationId=2015> or you can find this by entering 'Ebacc consultation' into Google. It is not necessary to register with the site in order to complete a response.

Attendance Concerns

Year 11 had an extra assembly on Tuesday as an introduction to their forthcoming Pre-Public Exams (PPEs). One of the key points that was made, and is applicable to students in all years, is the effect that poor attendance has on final GCSE grades. I thought it worth saying again here. 90% attendance is the minimum that is considered acceptable nowadays, but attendance below 94% is a concern. Parents are asked to check their child's attendance each time they receive a report.

Year 11: Key Dates

Students now have copies of their exam timetable and parents should have received a copy in the post along with the Year 11 tutor report. I would ask parents to ensure they see this and particularly note the timings that are explained at the bottom of the page. The written exams are on Monday-Friday, 7 - 11 December, with Food and Art exams the following week.

There are then some other key dates to note, including the first proper GCSE exam (not a PPE):

- Thursday 17 December: Sixth Form Taster Day
- Monday 11 January: English Literature Paper 1
- Tuesday 12 January: Mock Results Day*
- Wednesday 20 January: English Literature Paper 2
- Tuesday 19 January: Year 11 Parents' Evening

* This day will include a session with *Positively Mad* on exam technique and practice. There will also be some Careers based sessions to help support students in planning their next steps.

More information on the Sixth Form Taster Day will be issued via assemblies. This is for all of Year 11 and not just those who intend to stay in our Sixth Form.

Thank You

Thank you to everyone who attended Parents Evening on Tuesday. We hope that you found it of value. Please remember that parents may contact their child's teachers at any time during the year. It is usually best to contact the form tutor in the first instance.

Queensgate Nativity Scene

It has been brought to my attention that there will not be a nativity scene on display in the Queensgate shopping centre this year as the figures usually used are badly disfigured. The centre has arranged for some new ones to be made for next year, to be given to the cathedral, but it seems nothing will be displayed in the shopping centre. If you would like to see a nativity scene return to the shopping centre in future please email the service team on

customerservice@queensgatecm.co.uk

Sean Hayes

Learning Leader

Congratulations go to Lewis John who has recently received Learning Leader status in Science.

Well done Lewis.

Ms Wilson



Sixth Form Attendance

This week I have been meeting with some students and their parents regarding low attendance at school. Having a high level of attendance (94% and above) is linked to high success. High attendance will enable students to learn more, be supported more and ensure that they cover the key topics for their success.

**"I want to hire
employees who
arrive late"
Said no boss
ever**

Sixth Form Punctuality

As we all know, being punctual is not just an expectation for schools but for all career paths. Whether your child is planning to go to university, college or onto an apprenticeship, their future includes employment where being on time will be crucial. Several students are arriving after the bell with no valid reason. In line with school policy, students will receive an after school detention if they are late to school.



Sixth Form PPEs

These will be in the week commencing 7 December with the Art PPEs the following week. All students have been issued with a timetable and will be expected to attend each exam that applies to them.

Classics and Drama Theatre Trip The Odyssey – Cambridge Arts Theatre

On Thursday 19 November, 15 GCSE and sixth form students braved Miss Wilson's minibus driving to watch a production of 'The Odyssey' in Cambridge. Written by Simon Armitage, it fused the Homeric story of Odysseus with a modern 'take' on the origins of the Trojan War and a new political 'hero'. Students particularly enjoyed watching the adaptation of the Greek elements of the story, which included the story of the Cyclops and Odysseus' encounter with the Sirens. The play was thought provoking, as the modern content reflected on controversial issues such as immigration, racism and the nature of politics. Most students enjoyed the production; some Classics students were unsure about the changes to the myths and some of the modern parallels. The drama students analysed the play from a different perspective and there will be some follow up work between the departments to discuss the themes further. Thank you to Mr Burgess and Miss Walker for accompanying the students.

Peterborough Inter-Faiths Council

On the evening of Wednesday 18 November, we took 14 students to the Cathedral to perform in Peterborough Interfaith Council's UN Children's Day. This is an annual event where children from different faith communities put on performances in praying together for peace and compassion in the world. A collection was also made for the refugees and food from different cultures was provided at the end of the event. Our students represented the school brilliantly. Well Done!
Mr Akbar and Mr McCoy



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS CAROL SERVICE

Thursday 10 December
Followed refreshments

6 pm in the School Hall
All welcome to attend