



15 June 2018
HM/HC/GCSEYr10

Dear Parent

GCSE English September 2018

Due to the evolving nature of GCSE English qualifications, I felt that it was important to outline the key components of the course and the nature of the new GCSE English Specification that your child will be embarking on in September 2018.

At St John's all of our students in Year 10 will be working towards two English GCSEs: English Language and English Literature. In the English Department we like to teach these qualifications separately, encouraging students to value the importance of the two subjects as separate entities. Both GCSEs are assessed 100% by examinations at the end of the GCSE course in Year 11 meaning there is no coursework or controlled assessment. In order to prepare our students effectively for this, all of our assessments will be timed, unseen and completed in exam conditions within classrooms. English work books are where students will collate their notes, practise key skills and will therefore not be marked. Instead, we will prioritise marking timed assessments in order to give our students the most valuable and meaningful feedback. Students will have their work marked twice a term: once for English Language and once for English Literature. There is also a new form of assessment consisting of levels rather than grades. Students' feedback will therefore consist of these assessment objectives and numerical scores.

In order to study literature texts effectively, students are required to read key texts independently. In preparation, all Year 10 students are required to read 'A Christmas Carol' by Charles Dickens at home as their official Extended Learning over the summer break. They need to have read the book (in its entirety) and familiarised themselves with the plot by the start of Term 1 as this is when they will be studying the 19th Century Novel component of the literature course. The exam on this text at the end of Year 11 is 'closed book' meaning that students will not have a copy of the text in front of them. It is therefore imperative that students read all set texts in their entirety as unfortunately, due to the rigorous course content, we are not able to do this in lessons. Instead, class work will focus on close textual analysis and interpretative skills. Listening to an audio-book is a useful way to access the text but I would discourage students from relying on film versions. Every student will be given the opportunity to have the text issued through our school library, however many may like to purchase their own copy so that they can annotate and highlight the text as part of their study.

In January 2019 Year 10 will be studying the Shakespeare play *Macbeth*, which will be provided by the department, but as with 'A Christmas Carol' they may want to purchase their own copy for annotation purposes.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Kind regards,



Hayley McLaren
Key Stage Leader English