Dear Parent/ Carer

BGE (S1-2) MATHEMATICS

I wanted to take this opportunity to inform you of some important expectations within the Mathematics Department.

Course

Our Mathematics course is changing based on current research and examples of good practice across Scotland. It is our hope to be more responsive to our pupils' needs i.e. lessons being driven by pupil need rather than an estimated timeline on our course notes. As such we have stripped back the number of topics we teach in S1 and S2 and will spend much more time on that topic. Progress will be closely monitoring progress through regular formative assessment and we are looking for pupils to demonstrate a high level of performance and understanding before proceeding. Our BGE Mathematics course can be found on our school website here: knox.is/bgesml.

Assessment

We have had a lot of discussion in the Mathematics Department about assessment and sought out best practice. This Session we have decided to look at assessment differently and have decided to do this for three main reasons; firstly to reduce maths anxiety, especially during 'test time'; secondly to be more responsive to pupils needs; and thirdly, to encourage good study habits, so no cramming! Research suggests that good tests results, after cramming, show a false picture of future attainment as it is a poor indicator of long-term learning.

So, what are we doing now? We are using pre-teaching diagnostics (Entrance Tickets) to ensure that initial conditions for success are set, before teaching of new material begins. In addition to this every week each class will take a Curriculum Quiz and will be given one week's notice of the chosen topic from earlier in the Course. Relevant revision materials are provided on the RevisionHUB and we do ask that Learners show motivation and use this as opportunity to show what they are capable of. Each question in the Curriculum Quiz is multiple choice and, if necessary, remediation will then take place in class after analysis of results e.g. re-teaching, lesson starter and/or home learning task for example. This rich information will be useful for Learner Conversations, Reporting and Parents' Evenings. These are 'low stakes' with no consequences for high or low scores.

To complement this we have embedded termly problem solving tasks into our BGE courses allowing pupils to show how well they can apply their learning in problems which require increasing challenge and breadth of challenge.

Stationery

Pupils should come equipped with pencil, rubber, ruler and sharpener. We will supply protractors, compasses, etc. Should this be difficult the Mathematics Department has ready-made pencil cases which will be issued and collected at the end of the lesson. As part of the Knox90 - getting ready to start the lesson within 90 seconds of entering the classroom – all equipment should be on desks ready to start the Lesson Starter task promptly. Pupils are encouraged not to use pen or felt-tip pens.

Calculators

In S1 and S2 Mathematics we will emphasise mental strategies and non-calculator skills therefore a calculator is not a necessary item to bring to class. From S3 upwards Scientific Calculators are essential so should be brought to class every day. We do have some available to borrow during class but a Learner having their own is preferable.

Home Learning

Over the coming weeks we are asking Learners to complete a '5-a-day' task; five questions to be answered in their jotters and brought to class for the next lesson. Class Teachers will tell their classes what task number they are to complete and these can be accessed online here: knox.is/s1hl. Printed copies can be given on request and we will use Show My Homework to set completion dates on future home learning tasks.

I hope that this letter was informative but do contact me via the school office should you wish to discuss anything further.

Calum Blair

PTC: Numeracy and Computing

East Lothian Council