



27th March, 2019

Dear Parent/Carer

Current Year 8 students – Astronomy in Years 9 and 10

Through our science specialism, we are offering GCSE Astronomy as an extra-curricular option to the current Year 8 students. We have changed the course to be run during Years 9 and 10, avoiding extra pressure on the students during the all-important Year 11. As a result, this is the only time your child will be offered a chance to take this course at Mary Webb School.

The course starts in September 2019 and runs until May/June of Year 10, depending on examination timetables. Lessons take place Wednesdays from 3:30 to 5:00 pm, so students must be free and committed to attend all lessons. Lessons are like all lessons at Mary Webb School, where students will carry out various tasks to explore the wide ranging concepts from the Edexcel GCSE Astronomy syllabus. Students will be expected to carry out written tasks as well as drawing diagrams and graphs, tabulating data and calculating astronomical quantities. For this, they are expected to bring their usual lesson equipment.

Students will be set a target for the course, usually in line with their projections for science GCSE courses. The GCSE has been reorganised as part of the recent curriculum changes so the exam board awards grades from 1 to 9. Students will be assessed against this target through their written work, in class testing and mock exams, to be reported on through our normal reporting procedures. The expectation is that students work towards their target in astronomy as they would for any other examination course.

Students will complete at least two observational projects; one project will be a naked-eye observation, the other using an astronomical instrument. Students can use their own telescopes or binoculars for this but there is no requirement for the students to own this equipment as we sign them up to use a remote robotic telescope. Observations and written work for these projects will be done in class and at home. This written work will not contribute towards the GCSE but students will be asked about their project work during the terminal examinations.

Students will be set weekly homework for GCSE Astronomy; this will include written work, mathematical analyses, background reading, watching videos, examination preparation, revision and carrying out observational tasks at suitable times. A lot of this work will be in preparation for the next week's lesson so it is of vital importance that students organise their time effectively and keep up to date with their work.

To enrol on the course, the students will need to complete a task during the summer term. This will involve writing a letter of application, carrying out an observational task and research to answer some structured questions. The purpose of this task is for the students to demonstrate their enthusiasm and commitment towards any further study.

For more information, a short meeting will be held for parents and carers to learn more about the course content, the demands of the course and the pre-enrolment task on Wednesday 10th April at 5.30 pm. Please return the attached slip if you are intending to attend this meeting. Forms for enrolment will be given out during this meeting.

Yours sincerely

G Ward

Dr G Ward
Science Teacher

C Jones

Mrs C Jones
Head of Science

G Davies

Mr G Davies
Assistant Headteacher



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Name of Student: Form:

- I confirm my son/daughter would be interested in attending the afterschool GCSE Astronomy lessons starting in September 2019.

- *I will/*will not be able to attend the information evening on Wednesday 10th April, 2019 at 5.30 – 6.00 pm. (**Please circle as appropriate*)

Name of Parent/Carer: Signed:

Dated:

Please return your slip to the school office by Monday 8th April, 2019 GW/PR