

13 January 2016

Dear Parents/Carers

A Happy New Year to you all. As the first full week of the term draws to a close I thought I would let you know about our recent work on developing the academic literacy of our students with a focus termly on the language and vocals they should use.

Academic English is often quite different to the way we normally speak, write or in the case of students, text. It may require students to develop new ways of thinking and a new vocabulary to express themselves. Developing this higher tier language will support students in understanding and utilising a range of academic vocabulary in context and in interpreting texts and questions. Ultimately they will be better equipped to show sensitivity and discernment in the response they wish to convey.

It is a well recorded and established fact that developing academic language and vocabulary can have a significant effect on the outcomes for students, so we, as a school, have chosen to adopt this as one of our major strategies.

On our INSET day on the first day back this term we looked as a staff at both generic academic word lists and subject specific vocabulary. We devised a list of five hundred words across the subject range which we think will give our students a boost in exams and in life beyond.

The list can be found on our website and we would welcome your support by talking to students about the words they have talked about in lessons, assemblies and around school. All students at Ninestiles will be taught key academic terminology weekly. They will be given five academic words and five subject specific words to learn. So far we have covered the following words:

abandon, bias, coherent, manipulate, integrity, fundamental, eliminate

We would also like your support in ensuring students complete their homework tasks based around these words. For example they may be asked to write sentences containing the words, or to learn the spellings and definitions for a test.

I have no doubt that together we can grow our children's language to compete with the very best of their peers nationally and at the same time we can continue learning ourselves.

Year 11

Year 11 have been given their reports today. They will have two copies – one for their own reference and one for you. Please take the time to go through it with them as their teachers will have done in our Aspire lesson this morning. There is still time for students to make significant progress if they heed the advice given.

Standards for All

Our uniform equipment and behaviour standards have improved as a result of our Standards for All agenda. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support for this aspect of our work.

Forthcoming Events

Friday 20 January – Saturday 28 January – Ski trip

Wednesday 15 February – Parental Engagement event

Monday 20 February – Friday 24 February – Half Term

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sian Hartle', with a small dot at the end.

Sian Hartle
Principal