



Life Education newsletter

Great expectations



Spring 2020

The second week of January saw Megan and Harry announce their plans to step back as senior royals, having felt “tethered” by the weight of expectations that come with being a member of the royal family. However, you do not need to be born into royalty to feel the bite of family expectations.

January was exam month for children across the country, from Year 6 pupils sitting 11+ entrance exams, to Years 10, 11 and 13 sitting mocks in the first two weeks after the holiday.

For other pupils, the outcome of parents’ evening meetings in the spring term may be a source of tension. Parents want to help their children reach their potential, but it is a difficult balance between “tough love” and high expectations, and raising anxiety in our children.

What can parents and schools do to help children in the lead-up to exams?

In our previous newsletter about resilience and failure (spring term 2019) we talked about harnessing failure as a learning opportunity and encouraging children to step out of their comfort zone where it comes to co-curricular activities. The same is true for academic endeavour: as they prepare for exams children should become aware of their patterns of mistakes and address them actively, rather than learn a subject by rote. The Life Education curriculum includes lessons on personal organisation and revision for every academic year. These are tutor-led for KS3 and provided by the speakers from Elevate for KS4. Revision resources are accessible to students and parents on Firefly: <https://emanuel.fireflycloud.net/study-skills-1/revision-guidance-for-pupils>

At home, parents can help by supporting pupils in a number of ways: providing a structure for revising independently through the year, beyond their weekly homework. This can include specific times in the week dedicated to specific subjects, clear landmarks for what to revise by what date, a designated study area with no access to mobile phones or other distractions, and ensuring that students maintain and use a revision folder.

Praise for doing it right is a powerful and accessible tool. Helping them track their own progress is also essential: it can be discouraging for any hardworking pupil to see others cruise through a subject more successfully. Seeing that they are improving on their own achievement will confirm that their efforts pay off and give them a sense of achievement.

Most importantly, however, children have to take ownership of their own progress, rather than rely on being told what to do. The most successful learners have proven to be those who can self-regulate, constantly reflecting on how they tackle their learning, whether their strategies were successful, and how they can improve in future. This process, known as metacognition, is something Emanuel teachers have been exploring in Teaching and Learning Committee and are trying to encourage pupils to do habitually both within and outside of lessons.

Last but not least, pupils should continue with co-curricular activities to retain a sensible balance in all they do. The programme of assessments at Emanuel aims to build students’ confidence in their abilities and to ensure they fulfil their potential in all future academic endeavours.

Upcoming parent lectures

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| 23rd March | Study Skills talk for parents of Years 7 and 8 |
| 23rd April | Study Skills talk for parents of Year 10 |

Topics pupils have discussed since the start of this academic year include:

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| Year 6 | Assertiveness and food waste |
| Year 7 | Friendships and democracy |
| Year 8 | Self-esteem and body image |
| Year 9 | Social enterprise and healthy coping strategies |
| Year 10 | Mindfulness and study skills |
| Year 11 | Careers and volunteering |
| Lower sixth | Drugs awareness, ‘Stretched or Stressed’ and information about studying opportunities abroad (Astarfuture) |
| Upper sixth | Safe driving workshop, digital privacy & employability and Saving Lives – Anthony Nolan |

In addition to tutor-led Life Education, we have hosted the following talks:

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| Year 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speak out, Stay Safe (NSPC) VV1 TFL travel safety |
| Year 7 | E-safety (Childnet) |
| Year 8 | Mindfulness |
| Year 9 | Anxiety and depression |
| Year 10 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study Skills (Elevate) Exam anxiety (school counsellor) |
| Year 11 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study Skills (Elevate) Careers today |

Parent talks held this year

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| 9th October | Julie Johnson:“Helping your child deal with stress and anxiety” |
| 20th November | Jayne Constantini:“Communication skills for life – empowering our children and modelling best practice” |
| 28th January | Childnet:“Keeping your child safe online” |

Key contacts

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