

Responses to questions from parent forum

Thank you for taking the time to register your questions for the Parent Forum which was due to take place on Monday this week. The following is a response to some recurring themes that featured in the feedback. There were one or two individual questions which will be responded to individually from the principal or vice principal very early next week.

Homework – 2 questions relating to the amount and the technology used.

We are keen to get the balance right between the amount of homework to support effective learning within class but not at the detriment of student's enjoyment of extracurricular activities. We are currently reviewing our SPARX allocation of work in year 7 and 8 and are likely to reduce the time necessary after Easter – more details will be released soon.

As for the technology – there is a compelling case for using Tassomai, SPARX for maths and reading as well as other apps. They are designed to adapt to the abilities of the student and the algorithms work to reintroduce students to material covered some time ago to improve recall and retrieval. Homework set on these apps is far more effective than paper-based activities although, for older students, a hybrid of revision apps with past paper preparation can also be very effective.

Parent evening events and lack of individual subject meetings with teachers in year 7 and 8.

This has been a request of parent forums for some time and so we produced a summary of why we are unable to offer parent consultation with students in year 7 and 8 on our website. You can access the page here

<https://www.elycollege.com/attachments/download.asp?file=3925&type=pdf>

In essence, teachers can be directed to work 1265 hours across the year. This total is classed as directed time and the principal must allocate all teaching, report writing, assessment, planning and duties, to take place within the 1265 across the year. Teaching a normal timetable for 43 hours per fortnight (which is the normal loading for any teacher without additional roles) with duties, training days and parents evening makes up 1260.5 hours. Which means we have 4.5 spare hours at the end of the year.

We have a number of teachers in year 7 and 8 who teach multiple classes so, if one teacher teaches 4 year 7 classes then that teacher will teach 120 students. If each parent had a 10 minute slot with that teacher then that teacher would need 20 hours of appointments. But, in order to make directed time work, we set 3 hours aside for parents evenings. Therefore, our compromise, to make the system work, is that tutors meet with parents of students in year 7 and 8 as they can track across all the subjects. It is certainly not perfect – but there is no way for constructing a model with parents meeting with all their children's teachers without a great deal of children and parents missing out each time.

Why don't students have lockers?

We simply do not have the space to put lockers in corridors. With nearly 1700 students on site – there is no space available for this number. It might be possible to have lockers outside but that would require lots of outdoor coverage and canopies – and if we had those then we would want to use them so that the students can be kept under cover during their break time.

After college activities

We have many after college activities and you can find details of these on our website under the session 6 section here. <https://www.elycollege.com/session6>

Updates on children's performance in subjects

We understand that our reporting procedures can seem complex. We have produced a walkthrough video for parents on how to interpret their child's reports and summarising what other information we share with parents.

<https://www.elycollege.com/page/?title=How+is+your+child+doing+at+college%3F&pid=367>

Toilets – highlight the discussion on the Facebook page

We are not aware of the discussion on the Facebook page. We have made the decision to not engage with the parent forum page. We encourage all parents to contact the college if they have concerns or questions about the day-to-day operations of the college.

When previous concerns have been raised about cleaning, we have invited parents in to see the college toilet facilities and see how frequently they are cleaned and prepared for students. On the rare occasion that they are damaged then we seek to repair the facilities as soon as possible. We actively encourage students to drink during the day and have increased the number of water fountains and areas to recharge their water bottles. If students feel anxious about using the toilets, then we urge them to visit their house office and we can show them the best toilets to use. We want to assure parents that duty staff do patrol toilet areas and whilst some toilets can get busy, there are always quieter toilets that students can use.

Why can't students wear leggings?

Leggings are not part of the uniform so they should not be worn in college. The uniform guidelines, which can be found here

<https://www.elycollege.com/page/?title=Uniform+%26amp%3B+Equipment&pid=159> , state that girls can wear either a black skirt or trousers with optional black tights. We have had some students recently coming into college with no skirt on and just their leggings. The cold weather is not a reason to wear leggings, students can wear trousers. We will remind staff to be very consistent with asking students to remove leggings if they are found in college.

Work Experience and mocks

Work experience takes place mainly in year 10 and 12 although we do have a wide range of employer engagement opportunities across the year for all year groups. If you have any questions about work experience then please contact our careers advisor, Mrs Lambo-Hills on llambo-hills@elycollege.co.uk

Mock exams take place during November and February for year 11 and December for year 13.

Learning strategies for students

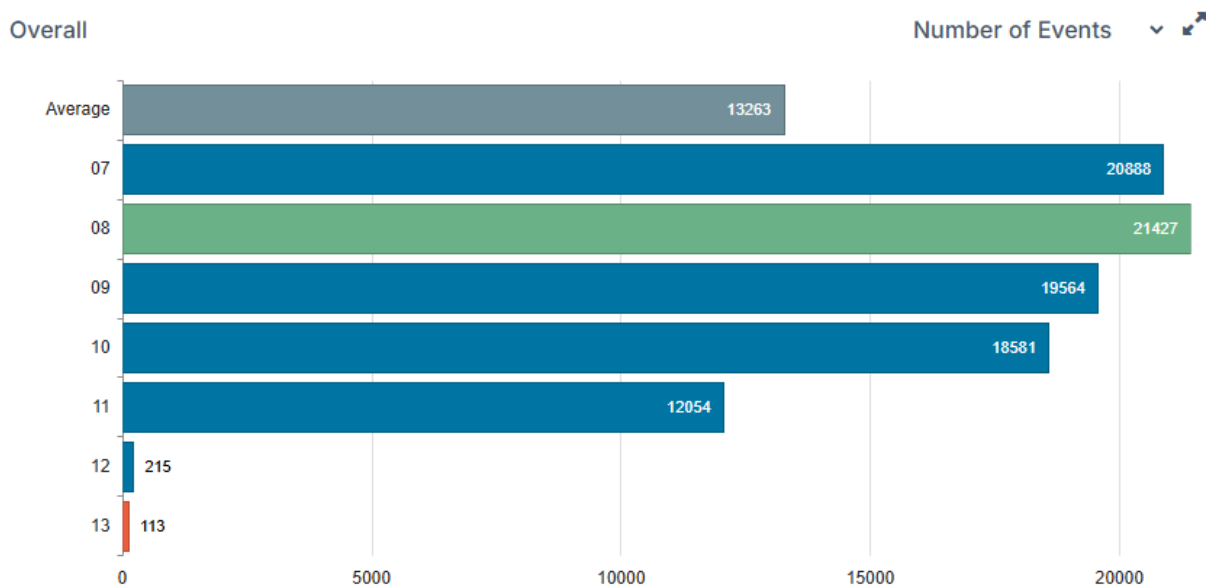
We hold revision strategy events at key times of the year for parents and have a range of resources on our website -

<https://www.elycollege.com/page/?title=Examinations+%26amp%3B+Revision&pid=133>

We also work actively with students in PSHCE and their individual subject lessons to teach them how the brain takes in information and how they can help the recall of that information at key times.

Decline in house points – why is there not more focus on awards?

So far we have issued 92,842 house points alone just for Academic Achievement, Effort, Citizenship and extracurricular participation. This equates to approximately 54.48 events per student. However, there is a clear discrepancy between year groups – and this has been a pattern that many schools see. Students in year 10 and 11 are less keen to seek house points and, as a result, sometimes staff cannot be as ready to issue them as before.



We do accept that our recognition of regular and persistent high standards has not been as prominent as it should be, and we are keen to resolve this. This year we launched two new

means of reward and recognition – the Senior Leader Commendation, issued to students with a significant improvement to attitude to learning or an outstanding attitude to learning. We have also launched a Principal Commendation – these will be issued to students who have collected two senior leader commendations during the year – as this award needs to have two report cycles to have taken place, we are looking forward to sharing our first Principal's Commendations very soon.