

Senior Girls

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**MERCHANT
TAYLORS'
SCHOOLS**

For Boys and Girls
aged 4 to 18 years

June 2018

Dear Parent/ Guardian

I am writing to inform you of an exciting new opportunity at MTGS for your daughter. From September 2018 all students in Y7, 8, 9 and 10 will have the opportunity to engage in an independent learning project outside of their current curriculum provision.

Independent learning sessions will involve discussion, debate, inquiry and project work. Students will be taught independent learning skills and will have the opportunity to put these into practice by holding a debate (Y7), writing a research project from a choice of titles (Y8), completing a more independent project with a title of their own creation (Y9) and ultimately becoming an independent learning mentor or advisor in Y10. In this way students will build the independent learning skills that are currently required to complete an EPQ (Extended Project Qualification) in Y12-13 and to be successful in the new independent coursework projects that have been reintroduced to a number of subjects at A-Level.

This will be our new approach to stretch and challenge beyond the curriculum for Y7-10 from September 2018. As we expect all students to participate, the Independent Learning Programme will replace the current selective Junior Harrison group system from September. This will, however, offer an excellent opportunity for the current members of the Junior Harrison Group to stretch themselves by exploring open ended and challenging questions. This approach will steer students away from trying to find the 'right' answer and focus more on the learning process.

The approach at Sixth Form will remain unchanged and will continue to allow all students to opt into the Harrison Group at the beginning of Y12. Students will then be expected to attend forums, lectures and give student led presentations in order to qualify for a Harrison badge and an invitation to the Harrison Dinner at the end of Y13. Y11 students will continue to be encouraged to attend suitable Sixth Form Harrison events.

Academic success will continue to be rewarded through the awards system at prize-giving and through Harrison Scholarships (in recognition of outstanding GCSE results).

Whilst there may be some disappointment in respect of these changes, we feel that this new project will provide all students with the opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge required for independent learning, which are vital for success in the new GCSE and A-Level specifications.

Kind regards,

Mrs C Tao
Headmistress

Mrs R Hames
Independent Learning Coordinator MTGS