9th September 2021

Dear Parents,

Computing Year 8 and 9

In Computing this year all Year 8 students will be working towards an IGCSE in ICT. They complete this qualification in the Summer of Year 9. The only difference between a IGCSE (International GCSE) and an GCSE is that students can take the qualification in other countries. This is a challenging course taken mostly by candidates across the world at the end of Year 11. The qualification involves a Theory Examination (1 ½ hours) and two Practical Examinations (each 2 ¼ hours). We have been offering this qualification at Key Stage 3 for 7 years now and offer it because we believe it prepares students well for all the practical software skills they will need in their future study and future careers. In addition, that it helps them understand the workload, independent learning skills and resilience required for the examinations in Year 10 and 11. Further information can be found here: [Cambridge IGCSE Information & Communication Technology (0417) (cambridgeinternational.org)](https://cambridgeinternational.org)

It should be noted that because we have 3 lessons a fortnight in the subject (4 next year) it is not possible for us to cover all the theory in class time. Preparation for this is done as fortnightly homework, followed up with a test on these topics every two weeks. Supporting and encouraging your son in ensuring this work is always completed on time will help him stay on track. All the homework set and the deadlines will be available for you and your son to see via Microsoft Teams.

Your son may find the following book beneficial in helping him prepare for the qualification, but it is not essential for success:

Cambridge IGCSE ICT Third Edition. By Graham Brown and David Watson.
[ISBN: 978-1-398-31854-0]

If the school is in receipt of pupil premium funding for your son, a copy of the above book will be provided. We will also have a set of reference copies in the IT rooms and library.

I often get asked what the difference is between ICT and Computer Science. Primarily ICT covers software skills and Computer Science is about programming and understanding how and why computers work. There is some cross over between the courses, but not a lot. We offer Computer Science as an option subject at Key Stage 4 and 5.

There will also be an opportunity to attend the IT rooms on Tuesdays for one hour after school (3.45-4.45), to either work on the computing homework or continue with the practical work we are doing in class.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs F. Round and Mr R. Lally