



9 February 2023

Dear Parents and Carers

RE: Mathematics homework and independent learning – upgrade to sparx!

Following the half term break we will be spending time visiting the computer rooms in Mathematics lessons to introduce everyone in year 7 – 10 to the sparx homework website and giving them their own logins now that we have secured an upgrade for all students. This follows an overwhelming positive response from our year 11 pilot launch in September.

Sparx is a Mathematics homework package which has all of the features of mathswatch that students, teachers and family's value as well as some incredible and intelligent extras. Our students are so good at completing their mathswatch to a high standard and meeting deadlines that this is the perfect way to boost their learning even more as sparx is the most advanced package available and is the only package to come with research proving that it supports better grades.

The impressive feedback from year 11 students and families has accelerated our move for everyone to sparx earlier than planned.

The main highlights of sparx are:

- The algorithms working behind the website learn each student; the difficulty level they get and the content of the weekly 40% retrieval is determined by how the student performs and behaves in previous weeks. Every single student gets a different homework but they still all cover the topics that they are learning with their teacher each half term.
- The difficulty is tailored to each student as soon as the student completes the induction practice task. Every student has questions pitched at the perfect level whether they need longer to answer questions, more repetition of content or need to be stretched and challenged! 96% of year 11 students said that the level of difficulty was just right to ensure that it was worthwhile.
- Every student truly can get 100% correct each week which is the challenge we can confidently set for all! As well as tailored difficulties, every single problem comes with a shadow example that is identical in process, shown with a video which is under 2 minutes. Year 11 rated the video feature as 4.6 out of 5 for being useful and easy to use. Each week around 98% of our students in year 11 get 100% correct and not because it is easy. We offer changing and fun rewards to ensure that students and whole classes are recognised for meeting this expectation.



Other benefits include automatic weekly emails to parents/carers with scores and reminders, XP points as a way to win competitions and reach special levels, consolidation and extension tasks and full coverage of GCSE content available in addition to set tasks as an independent study and revision resource.

Students need not worry about preparing for the change. Their teachers will run through the basic training with them in good time before their first task is set, the first due date will be the 8th March and then sparx is set and due at 8am each Wednesday of term time, making it simple and easy to remember. Students can use computers in school at lunch time or after school if they are unable to work online at home, although it is easily completed on mobile phones, tablets and ipads as well as PCs.

At PHSG we know that this will help students to become even better independent learners as well as Mathematicians and we look forward to hearing how our year 7, 8, 9 and 10 students are doing over the coming months.

In summary

Students all have the same goal each week, to get 100% correct before the deadline! We hope that parents and carers will find the weekly emails which you should get starting around 5th March to be of value to you.

Support videos

Below are some helpful videos for both the students and families to help familiarise yourselves with how sparx will look and work each week. Students do not need an extra book as they will be asked to complete the work required for their book work checks in the back of their class book.

[Introduction video for students](#)

[An explanation of sparx for parents](#)

[A detailed look at bookwork expectations](#)

Yours sincerely

Gina Alford-Freeman

Mrs Alford-Freeman
Head of Maths