

29 September 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

### **RE: Key Stage 3 Maths at St Mark's Academy**

We are writing to you from the Maths Department to share some information about how we teach mathematics at St Mark's Academy. It's important that we work together to ensure your child thrives in this subject. Success in maths is vital for creating future opportunities for your child.

#### **Teaching Groups in Maths**

In maths, students are placed into groups based on their prior attainment. This allows us to provide the right level of pace and support for each child. We do not discuss 'sets' with students. We occasionally review these groupings, usually following end-of-term assessments, and also consider classwork, homework, and a student's attitude to learning when making these decisions. Whatever group your child is in, our expectation is the same: every student will be suitably challenged and supported to achieve their full potential.

#### **Equipment**

Students are expected to bring a scientific calculator to every maths lesson. The required model is the **Casio FX-85GTCW** (or **Casio FX-85GTCW+**). We ask that no other calculator models are purchased, as these are the only models we will use for teaching in lessons. Students should have their calculator with them every maths lesson. Please ensure it is clearly labelled with your child's name. **If you anticipate any difficulty purchasing a calculator, please email [zbozzard-hill@stmarks.anthemtrust.uk](mailto:zbozzard-hill@stmarks.anthemtrust.uk) as soon as possible so that we can provide support.**

Other equipment students need includes a pencil, ruler, protractor and compasses. Students should bring a pencil and ruler to every maths lesson. Teachers will let students know in advance when a protractor and compasses are required, and these will be provided in lessons if needed.

#### **Homework**

We use Sparx Maths to set weekly homework. Students are set new tasks **every Thursday** and they have one week to complete it. They will be provided with a homework book in which they must write down all of their calculations. Students without access to a device or the internet at home can complete their homework in the library at school.

Homework is considered complete only when 100% of the tasks are finished, which is achievable because tasks are personalised to each student's attainment level. Sparx allows students to watch accompanying videos or use the 'swap question' function if they struggle. Homework should not be left until the night before it is due, as this does not give students enough time to seek help. If further

support is needed, students should speak to their teacher or attend the **Sparx drop-in session on Monday lunchtime in IT1.**

#### **Logging into Sparx:**

1. Go to the [Sparx Maths website](#)
2. Select our school
3. 'Log in to Sparx using Microsoft'
4. Enter the student's school email address and the same password they use for the school computers  
School email format: [\*][**first letter of first name**][**surname**]**@stmarks.anthemtrust.uk**  
\* Y7: 26 Y8: 25 Y9: 24  
e.g. Joe Bloggs in Y7: 26JBloggs@stmarks.anthemtrust.uk
5. If they forget their password, they can reset it with any of their teachers

Homework completion is carefully monitored, and sanctions will be given in line with school policy where homework is missed or incomplete.

#### **Support at School**

In lessons, teachers live model examples, explicitly teach fluency strategies to promote efficient calculation, and check understanding regularly to support all students' learning. Students are encouraged to ask questions whenever they need clarification, even outside of lesson time.

The Sparx drop-in sessions provide an additional opportunity for students to practise, ask questions about classwork, or get support with homework.

#### **Support at Home**

We encourage parents and carers to support their children at home in the following ways:

- Make sure they know their times tables. If they do not know their times tables up to 12 x 12 yet, recite them together regularly. They can also practise their times tables on Sparx.
- Discussing when they will complete their homework each week.
- Speaking positively about mathematics, even if it wasn't your favourite subject at school. Ask your child to show you what they've been learning in maths and always be enthusiastic about it.
- If they need additional practice, encourage them to use the personal practice and independent learning sections on Sparx. If they prefer paper-based activities, please email Miss McDonald or Miss Bozzard-Hill and they can guide you on suitable workbooks to purchase.

Thank you so much for your support. We look forward to working with you and your child this academic year!

Yours faithfully,

Miss McDonald - **Head of Maths**

Miss Bozzard-Hill - **Second in Charge of Maths**