

September 2017

Dear Parent / Guardian

RE: Year 12 – Calculators (12A/Ma1 and 12D/Ma1)

Following reform to the A-Level Mathematics and Further Mathematics specifications, we have reviewed our guidance to students regarding purchase of an additional calculator. Our past guidance has been a strong recommendation to buy a graphical calculator. We are now strengthening the position to make the purchase of a graphing or advanced scientific calculator a mandatory course requirement for all students studying towards either of these two subjects. Please see the models in bold below for our recommendation.

Ofqual, the examinations regulator, state that calculators used must perform the following functions:

- an iterative function
- the ability to compute summary statistics and access probabilities from standard statistical distributions
- the ability to perform calculations with matrices up to at least order 3 x 3 (Further Maths only)

The minimum standard for this is an advanced scientific calculator, such as the Casio fx-991EX ClassWiz. However, graphical calculators have this facility along with the additional advantage of being able to plot the graphs of functions. Our preferred models are either the **Casio fx-9750 or Casio fx-9860**. Our reason for suggesting models from one manufacturer are so that all students are working on similar calculators. Staff are also trained to use the Casio calculators and may not be able to offer the same immediate support for alternative models.

Students should buy the calculators as soon as possible. We are expecting to use them in class soon and students will be at a disadvantage if they are not fully equipped. Some stationers are offering deals as part of their 'back to school' range and will offer further student discounts. Buying second-hand calculators remains the best value for money. There is no purchase of textbook required for Year 12 study as students will have access to online materials. Students will also find that their graphical calculator will serve them well for higher level study.

Please be wary of external packaging or customer reviews on other models in the Casio range or other products. Many recommendations such as 'suitable for A-level' have not been updated for the new specifications. There are also calculators that would not be permitted because they are too 'helpful'.

Please contact me if I can be of further assistance.

Yours sincerely

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