

17 February 2022

Dear Parents/Carers,

### **Summer examinations**

As I'm sure you are aware, exam boards have now released further information regarding the structure of the summer examinations. Each subject has varying degrees of advance notice, changes to the structure of the exam and reduced content. Subject teachers and tutors will be discussing the subject specifics over the coming weeks but a summary of these changes can be found [here](#). If you have any questions regarding the advance information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

### **Mocks**

We will run a second full series of mock examinations during term 4 from 14 March to 25 March. The full timetable for term 4 and 5 including all exams and revision sessions can be seen [here](#). This is a live document that will be updated regularly and includes the details of mocks which are noted in pink. You may note from this that in order to facilitate a 13:00 pm start for afternoon exam sessions, year 11 students will now take their lunch break between 12:20 pm and 12:55 pm instead of the later break that they currently have.

### **Revision and Independent Study**

We know that on-going revision is crucial in ensuring students excel in their mocks and summer examinations. We have previously spoken to students about the importance of having a revision timetable and will be working with them further in the coming weeks to consider revision techniques. We also appreciate that your support at home is invaluable and so have included below some top tips for revision.

1. Encourage your child to make a revision timetable – and stick to it. There are some great examples and templates on [BBC Bitesize](#). Agree on an independent study routine with your child. For example, will they work immediately when they come home or will they have a break first? It is important that students have time away from their studies, which day will this be and what will this look like?
2. Make sure your child has a quiet space to work, with no distractions. This can be in the year 11 study space at school, at home, or in a local library.
3. Help your child to find the method of learning and retaining information that works best for them. The [Learning Scientists website](#) has some great resources for ways you can support your child with revision techniques. We know from research that reading and making notes is not the most effective method of revision. Instead, encourage your child to try:
  - a. Quizzing themselves using flashcards. You can even help your child by testing them too!
  - b. Writing mindmaps
  - c. Watching video clips and answering follow up questions
  - d. Completing exam questions.

4. Check the exam specifications. All exam boards publish these, along with practice papers and mark schemes too. Alternatively, speak to your child's teacher directly. We are always able to help with targeted ideas, example questions and past papers of our own.
5. Search out revision apps and online resources – such as BBC Bitesize, Seneca, Hegarty – to clarify areas your child feels less confident about. Teenagers sometimes concentrate on their best subjects/topics and leave their weaker ones till the end but it is a good idea to tackle weak areas early on. They should revisit these challenging topics frequently.
6. Encourage them to break revision into manageable chunks and to take regular breaks in between revision sessions. It's far more effective to do 30 minutes of successful revision – rather than plough on for hours on end and not get anywhere. This is backed up by research by academics at the University of Sheffield who found that learning is more effective when spread out over stretches of time. At this time in the year, students should be completing three or four 20-30 minute chunks of revision alongside their homework.
7. Exercise is a huge factor in maintaining good mental health, physical health and sleep patterns. Encourage them to take walks and runs, or to participate in sport at school.
8. It has been proven that healthy food can aid focus, while unhealthy food can lead to poor sleep and sugar crashes. Try to keep an eye on what your child eats and drinks and encourage good choices.
9. Sleep is key. Set a bedtime and stick to it. Avoid 'blue light' devices for, at least, an hour before bed. We all know this is a tough ask, but the benefits are huge.
10. Most important of all, help your child to keep everything in perspective. Remind them that the better they prepare and the more confident they feel in their subject knowledge the less stressed they will feel when the exams start. But by the end of June the exams will be over and it will be the start of the long summer holidays.

Yours sincerely

*Kate Richards*

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