

March 2019

Dear Parent/Carer

As you are aware, we are now just short of eight school weeks away from the first GCSE examination, with just under five weeks before the Easter break. We are very focused on ensuring the best possible GCSE examination preparation and outcomes for your child and are delighted that so many students have engaged with the revision opportunities being offered in school and in the '50 Days to Amaze' countdown. This letter is intended to give you an update as to what is currently happening in school for Year 11 along with some information about the run up to the final days of Year 11. As always, if you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or Mr Scott.

### **Form Time Preparation**

The GCSE exams are extremely important as they provide our students with a 'passport' for the next stage of their life. Regrettably, too many students do sometimes underestimate their importance and do not put the necessary work into performing as well as possible. All the research and evidence shows that when students start preparing for exams in January/February, they approach the exams feeling confident and with much less stress and anxiety and as a result, they do very well. To continue to support our students with their preparation, during form time last week, students received a full session on the best way to prepare and organise their time over the next six weeks. Every student in Year 11 received a blank revision timetable, a copy of all the open revision sessions on offer, and an intervention card which highlighted specific sessions that would benefit them personally. (Please ask to see these documents and discuss your child's revision timetable with them. A copy of the presentation delivered and the assembly they received is available on the website for you to view.)

Form Time is a very important part of the school day. Not only is important information, such as exam information, distributed, it also becomes additional learning time. During Form Time, Year 11 students are able to use this time to revise; all students have access to both Tassomai

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and GCSEPod. It is slightly disappointing that not all students are taking advantage of these two fantastic resources. It is proven that both help improve outcomes at GCSE with consistent use. If we feel that your child is not accessing these resources enough, they will be required to attend a catch up session. We also have a number of students during form time who will work in very small, targeted intervention groups with subject specialists; your child has been informed if they are to attend one of these. Over the last couple of years, this has proved very useful for students and they have really benefited from it.

### **How can parents help?**

Many parents contact me to ask how they can best support their child, being involved is a crucial factor in their revision and preparation. The following will be a great support to them:

- Ensure your child has created a manageable timetabled revision schedule on the template provided and that they stick to it. They need to build sensible breaks into the schedule but the fact is that the next 4 months will be hard work and they need to do as much work as possible; as we all know it will be worth it in the end. As a starting point, we have told students they should be completing around three hours an evening, including homework time.
- Ensure your child is accessing GCSEPod and Tassomai regularly.
- Continue to encourage, motivate and reward them as much as possible. Try to take an interest in what they are working on and help them with regular testing and checking. Revision can be a lonely business and they need to feel that they are supported and that you are proud of them for the work they are putting in.
- If you have any concerns, either general or subject specific, please contact the relevant person at school as soon as possible. We are all here to help the students, and are very happy to advise and support you to ensure your child does the best they can.

### **Attendance during the exam period**

During the exam period, at least until the 12th June, students will be expected to attend school as usual, when they are not in examinations. When not in an examination, subject teachers will be in lessons ready to help with revision. If their subject has already been examined, their class teacher will facilitate revision for examinations still to happen and students should bring revision with them to their lessons – they have plenty! Every minute counts and this is a useful and productive period of time for examination preparation – successful schools support students through the examination season and again research shows results are better because of it! Students are expected to attend both examinations and lessons in full school uniform. If we have an unusually hot spell, similar to last year, we will make reasonable adjustments and students will be kept fully informed. As with previous years, if your child has an afternoon exam, the school lunch break for Year 11 will be moved to between Periods 3 & 4, 12.15 to 13.00 to facilitate the prompt start for afternoon examinations. Please note, after school revision

sessions will continue and students leaving an examination are more than welcome to attend these sessions. From Thursday 13th June, students can come into school for examinations only, as the majority of large exams will have finished. All students are still welcome to study in school until the last exam on 18th June 2019; all we ask is that they sign in at student services.

### **Final Assembly & Prom**

On Thursday 27th June, during period 1, we will be holding a final Year 11 assembly for students. This will be the opportunity for students and staff to reflect back over the past 5 years, and look forward to future successes. Students must attend in full school uniform, although they will be allowed to wear their Year 11 Leavers' Hoodies if they have purchased one. These will be given out in the sports hall during registration. Students have in the past also brought a spare shirt so they can get staff and peers to sign this, this is absolutely fine, but they will not be allowed to wear them, so they must bring a spare. The time for your child to really start to unwind will be at the Year 11 Prom which will take place in the evening of the 27th. Mr Scott is organising this event and will contact you shortly with further details. In the past, a small number of students have misunderstood the tone and focus of this day and have acted in ways which has impacted on the learning of others across the school. They have subsequently not been allowed to attend the prom. We do not want this to happen this year; and we welcome your support with this.

### **Behaviour**

Finally, positive behaviour plays a key part in order for students to be successful in their final exams. We expect all students to put in 100% effort in all lessons, attend sessions offered by staff and behave. As a school we expect to fully focus on the education of our students; therefore, we expect behaviour to be exceptional at all times. We will not allow poor behaviour over the next eight weeks to affect the learning of any student, nor do we expect to be dealing with friendship issues or issues with social networking in lesson time. We expect all students to be in all lessons, learning. With this in mind, all behaviour issues will be dealt with in a timely manner, consistently and fairly. Students will be issued with consequences if their behaviour falls below the expected level.

Being in Year 11 does have its benefits; the biggest benefit of all is gaining as many good qualifications as possible and being able to do whatever your child wishes to do when they leave. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the support I know you will give your child in ensuring they reach their full potential in the upcoming exams.

Please visit the [Year 11 revision & study page](#) to access the following documents:

- Make it stick – Helping your child to revise
- Wellbeing – Supporting your child through exams
- #50 Days to Amaze – Information regarding the countdown

- Exam Command Words – what do they mean?
- Revision/Support Sessions Timetable
- Blank Revision Timetable
- Time to prepare - Form time presentation
- Time to prepare – Assembly presentation

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H Ryles-Dean', written in a cursive style.

Mrs H Ryles-Dean

Assistant Headteacher – Raising Standards and Aspirations