

October 2019

Dear Parent/Carer

As you are aware, we are now just six weeks away from the Year 11 mock examinations. We are really focused on ensuring the best possible GCSE preparation and outcomes for your child and are delighted that so many students have already engaged with the intervention opportunities being offered in school. This letter is intended to give you an update as to what is currently happening in school for Year 11 and what will be on offer after the half term holiday. As always, if you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact either myself, Mrs Feast (Head of Year) or Mrs Hunter (Pastoral Manager for Year 11).

Mock Exam Preparation

All the research and evidence shows that when students start preparing for exams early, they approach the exams feeling more confident and with much less stress and anxiety and, as a result, they tend to do very well. To support our students with their preparation for the mock exams, students received sessions during assembly and form time this week on the best way to prepare and organise their time over the next six weeks. Every student in Year 11 has received a blank revision timetable and has been made aware of how they can access the list of all the revision sessions on offer. During the next half term, students will also receive an intervention card highlighting the specific sessions that would most benefit them personally. Please ask to see these documents and discuss your child's revision timetable with them.

Students will receive their first progress report after half term, the format of which is consistent with previous reports and we hope you find it useful and informative. The target grades are set for the end of Year 11 and ought to be a challenging but realistic target based largely on KS2 data. The emerging grade is the grade they are currently on track to achieve at the end of Year 11. A plus (e.g. 7+) denotes a chance that a student has a good chance of achieving the grade above; a minus (e.g. 7-) denotes a chance of a drop to the grade below. Please bear in mind that it is very difficult to make accurate predictions because so much can change between now and the exams – not least how hard students work!

Following this, students will receive their mock exam timetable. The majority of the exams will run between 4th - 18th December.

Form Time

Form Time is a very important part of the school day. Not only is important information, such as exam information, distributed but it also becomes additional learning time. During Form Time, Year 11 students are able to use this time to revise. As you are aware, we have a number

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of excellent revision strategies and tools at the disposal of our students, including GCSEPod, Tassomai and knowledge organisers. It is proven that all these 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.

Opportunities to study

Along with all the extra intervention happening in form time, we also have a number of students during the school day who will work in small, targeted intervention groups with subject specialists; your child has already 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.

Students are also able to access silent study areas across the week in school. The 'Revision Room' is held in the school library and is open from 8am on Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday, and after school until 5pm on a Monday, Wednesday and Thursday. Tea and toast are provided in the morning and hot drinks after school. It has been great to see so many students taking the opportunity to complete high-quality revision before and after school and if you feel your child is not completing enough revision at home, please encourage them to attend these sessions.

Tassomai and GCSEPod

The cost of subscribing all our Year 11s to Tassomai and GCSEPod is significant and we would welcome contributions if you feel that you are able to afford it. An item with a suggested contribution will appear on your Parent Pay account as "Revision Contribution" for this purpose.

How can parents help?

Many parents contact me to ask how they can best support their child and the first thing to say is that being involved can be 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 eight months will be hard work and they need to do as much work as possible; it will be worth it in the end. As a starting point, we have told students they should be completing around two to three hours work per 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.

- Please visit the Key Stage 4 revision & study page on the school website to access documents that will support both you and your child.

Attendance and behaviour during Year 11

During Year 11, as in any other year, students are expected to attend school every day – and every minute counts. According to a DfE Report in March 2016, pupils with no absence are nearly three times more likely to achieve 5+ GCSE grades 9 - 5, including English and Mathematics, than pupils missing 15% of KS4 lessons. At Lymm High School, we have noticed an especially strong correlation between students who stay in school and attend all lessons for the final few weeks, once exams have started, compared to those whose attendance falls away.

Finally, positive behaviour plays a key part in order for students to be successful in their final exams. As always, we expect all students to put in 100% effort in all lessons, attend sessions offered by staff and behave impeccably. As you would expect, we will not allow poor behaviour over the next eight months to affect the learning of any student and nor do we expect to be dealing with friendship issues or issues with social networking during 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 and students will be issued with consequences if their behaviour falls below the expected level.

Key Dates

Please remember that it is year 11 Parents' Evening on Thursday 28th November from 4.30pm – 7.30pm in the Sports Hall. This is an excellent opportunity for you to get specific and focused feedback on where your child is at in every subject. Before that, we are hosting a "Make it stick – help your child to revise" evening on the 18th November, from 6pm until 7pm. Further details about this evening will be sent out after half term.

Being in Year 11 does have its benefits; and the biggest benefit of all is gaining as many good qualifications as possible and being able to do whatever you wish in the future. With that in mind, 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 mock exams. Between us, we will, I am sure, make this year a positive and rewarding experience.

Kind regards



Mrs H Ryles-Dean
Deputy Headteacher