



7 February 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

The Year 13 mock examinations will run from Monday 24 to Friday 28 February. All students following A' level courses will sit at least one examination in each subject; in many instances, there will be several papers. In an attempt to recreate the summer exams, students will be allowed to take study leave for this week, only attending school to sit their mock exams. All students are of course welcome to use our study spaces and attend school as normal if they prefer. However, students following BTEC courses must continue to attend all lessons during this time in preparation for any external exams/coursework submission dates. Students who study a mixture of BTECs and A' levels will be expected to attend all BTEC lessons as usual, except where they have a mock exam which will take priority. (These students have been issued with an additional timetable to ensure clarity over which timetabled lessons they must attend.) Students now know the dates of their examinations and the expectations surrounding study leave have been clearly explained.

By February half term, students will have largely completed all of the specifications in their subjects and the purpose of the mock examinations is to assess students' current understanding. It is therefore imperative that they prepare for these examinations properly. Poor results through lack of revision will only indicate what we already know - that failure to prepare will result in poor outcomes! Following these mocks, students will have an intensive period of revision where they can address any areas of weakness and work on these in preparation for the final summer exams.

We suggest that students study during the half term break as if they were in school, completing at least six hours of school work each day. Please support your son/daughter with this. They have also been given a study planner to help plan their time. Students work best when they take a 15-minute break for each hour they work, as staring at books for hours is counterproductive and knowledge will not be committed to memory. We highly recommend that students spend the vast majority of their revision time testing themselves using past papers, multiple choice tests and writing out their notes from memory. Making cue cards and doing mind maps can be useful, but the emphasis should be on recalling material to identify where forgetting has occurred, allowing students to clearly identify where their gaps are.

Please do involve yourself in your son/daughter's revision. Although you may not be able to help with the topics, you can certainly make a huge difference by providing a quiet space to work, plenty of encouragement and the reassurance needed to keep working hard! It is equally important to make sure students take breaks and we strongly advise that they should drastically reduce any paid employment to no more than one short shift a week. Students often tell us they work best late into the evening; please deter them from doing this as it often impacts on their sleep, and they need eight hours per night. This can be an incredibly stressful time and I am sure you are experiencing this first hand at home; a little stress is normal and can boost performance, but if you are in any way concerned, please do contact us.

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Following the mock exams, lessons will be focused on revision and exam technique. To get the most out of these lessons, it is useful for students to have revised topics in advance, so time can be spent with staff on the sections they find the most challenging. Where additional revision sessions are on offer to students, these have been advertised and students are encouraged to attend. We continue to operate two silent study areas, the upper hexagon and S202, both of which remain no phone or headphone zones. These rooms ensure students are completely focused and have the quiet space to conduct meaningful revision during the school day.

If you have any queries or concerns, please do contact us.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'H JENNINGS', written over a light grey dotted grid background.

H JENNINGS (Mrs)

Assistant Headteacher - Head of Sixth Form