

Dear parents/carers,

I hope that you have all enjoyed a safe and restful half term break. Our Year 11 students have had a well-earned rest and I am pleased that they have returned to us feeling both energetic and enthusiastic about the challenges that lie ahead of them this half term.

In line with our usual way of working for this time of year, we will be increasing the expectations around independent study and revision with Year 11 this half term to support them in preparing for their mock examinations which are due to take place between 7th to 18th December. This week, all Year 11 students have had a virtual assembly delivered to them outlining some of the fantastic online revision resources that we have on offer for them. These include Tassomai and GCSE Pod which have a proven track record of increasing student outcomes when used frequently and alongside exam style questions. It is vital that students are incorporating these apps into their daily revision routine in order to ensure that they are effectively prepared for their upcoming mock exams. There is an Information and Guidance Presentation available on the school website which outlines how these apps work and how they can benefit each student. I would encourage you to watch this if you haven't done so already.

Additionally, we also have a wide range of face to face and 'Zoom' support sessions available this half term for Year 11 students to help them in preparing for their mock exams. Please find a link to these [here](#). These sessions will mainly be taking place after school due to the new operational changes which we have had to make to the school day. Each student has been provided with their own A5 copy. Please note that this is a working document and it is likely that we will be adding further provisions to support the progress of students.

Whilst we understand that any type of formal assessments can cause worry amongst students, we do ask for your support in reassuring our Year 11 students that we have a wide range of support available both academically, and through our pastoral team. If students are feeling overwhelmed or worried about how to approach their revision, please do encourage them to speak to their form tutors for advice. We will be providing students with weekly assemblies, outlining key tips for motivation and revision, as well as giving each student their own blank revision timetable to plan out their approach to independent study and organise their time effectively.

Whilst these mock examinations are essentially a 'dress rehearsal' for the external GCSEs taking place in June, they will be an important factor in us determining the progress of the students so far. Not only will they help staff and students to identify any gaps in knowledge, but the outcomes of students will also allow more bespoke intervention and targeted revision to take place in the new year. It is crucial that students do take these examinations seriously and take advantage of the wide range of revision support opportunities available to them to ensure that their results are a true reflection of their capabilities.

We are working towards our Year 11s sitting external examinations in June as usual and we would be saying similar things at this stage of the year in 'normal' times; mock exams are always very important. However, we do need to be aware that results in mock examinations this year could end up being used in one form or another to make judgements about overall performance when it comes to final GCSE grades in the event that a student cannot sit exams for any reason. If this does happen, mock exams will certainly not be the only piece of data used, but they are likely to be an important part of the picture. There are plenty of rumours flying about at the moment about what might happen in the summer, but very little clarity. It is clear that the government is desperate for students to sit exams if at all possible, but nobody can predict anything just at the moment and therefore, as I have said to them many times already this year, hard work and consistency throughout the year will be more important than ever as the keys for them to achieve success.

I would like to thank you in advance for supporting the attendance of your child at the revision sessions available for them, as well as supporting their engagement with independent study at home. As always, should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Miss Taylor (Head of Year) or me about any of the above.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized loop followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Mrs Feast

Assistant Headteacher: Raising Standards and Achievement