

Dear Parent/Carer

This letter outlines important information regarding your child's GCSE examinations along with an enclosed individual exam timetable, revision tips and suggestions of how you can help your child in preparation and during the exam period.

Written exams begin on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2019 and run until Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

*(Pupils need to be available up to and including 26<sup>th</sup> June – JCQ National Contingency Day 2019, in case of national circumstances which necessitate a change of date for an examination.)*

Throughout the exam period pupils will have individualised timetables and attend lessons until their final exam. Pupils will be expected to bring revision materials with them.

The GCSEs are national public exams and pupils have to attend at the correct time as indicated on their timetables. Morning exams start at 9.00am and those in the afternoon at 1.00pm. It is important that the pupils are ready to enter the examination room 15 minutes before the start time.

Please make sure that your child is out of bed before you leave for work on exam mornings. Make sure they have breakfast as this will help them concentrate. Check they have the correct equipment for the exams; writing equipment, calculator, uniform.

### Preparation for the exams:

Pupils have had assemblies explaining different revision methods and strategies. They should now be in full swing of their revision. It would be very useful if you could go through this revision checklist with them.

### Revision Checklist:

To support your child in preparation for the exams. Please ensure they have the following for their revision;

- Exam timetable – put the dates on the family calendar
- Revision timetable
- Revision guides
- Pens, pencils, paper, card etc?
- A list of the topics for each course?
- An understanding of their knowledge/skills gaps for each topic?
- A quiet space to revise?
- Turned off all screens/phones and distractions when revising?
- Your support by spending time testing them

### During the Exam Period:

The exam period can be intense for both the student and their family. It can sometimes be difficult to know how to support them best. Below are some ideas that will help.

#### Parents:

##### **Be there**

Provide a calm and supportive environment at home: try to be there for your child, both to provide practical things like food, and to help when there's an emotional crisis because a paper was unexpectedly hard or a friendship is unsettled.

Organising an event to look forward to when it's all over, an evening out or weekend away, can be a good idea. And make sure your expectations are realistic, and tie in with your child's.

##### **Help them plan**

Research shows that memory is the key to exam success; it also shows that strategic learning is crucial when it comes to remembering things. You can help your child by helping him or her devise a revision strategy.

Encourage your child to be organised, to have a plan. This is very important, and it's something you really can help with, especially at times when the enormity of the task seems overwhelming for the young person.

You might not understand the details of their work, but you can help them plan it. And don't panic: it's never too late.

Ensure children have the outline for each course, so that they know exactly what they're supposed to cover. "Stick each part on to cards"

Encourage children to read quality newspapers regularly. "The quality of writing and vocabulary will be absorbed and help their own work, and it gives a wider perspective on current affairs."

##### **Anxiety**

Exam stress is as much an issue for parents as for their children: be aware of this. Lots of young people are worried because their parents are worried. If you can present a calm outlook it will help.

##### **Be on their side**

Stay on your child's side: let them know your love isn't conditional. Give them food they'll enjoy and do anything you can to give them a bit of extra love and care.

Protect them: don't have the house full of friends, and don't expect them to put in an appearance at family events.

## Students:

Think about the context in which you first learnt something: for example, visualise the science experiment, the methods you used and the results recorded.

### Practice

Practice by doing timed past papers and get them marked with feedback. To find out what examiners are looking for, dig out their marking schemes. Schools also offer revision classes in GCSE subjects. These will explain how to get certain grades and provide the opportunity to seek individual guidance. You might need something explained again or help to identify what to revise to get the highest marks possible.

### Plan

Plan your revision timetable to follow your exam timetable. Revise hard in slots of an hour or less. Write rather than read. Take a 10-minute break (time yourself) Test yourself on what you've just learned. Ask someone to test you. Try teaching someone else.

### Unwind

A good revision programme should leave you time to unwind. Relax for an hour a day at least – listen to music, watch television or take exercise.

### Sleep

Don't try to sleep straight after revising – your brain will be too active and stop you from getting to sleep. Get regular sleep and avoid too much junk food and caffeine (coffee, Coke and tea). The best revision is done in the morning.

### Cramming

Never cram immediately before an exam, it will just make you anxious about all the things you don't know. Make sure you've got everything ready and have a good breakfast. Give yourself plenty of time to get there, you cannot perform at your best if you're stressed before you start.

### In the Exam

Never begin writing straight away in the exam. Make sure you know which parts are optional, which parts are compulsory, and which don't apply to you at all. Take time to read the paper carefully, and plan your answers. Try to leave time to read through your answers, as you will lose marks for poor spelling and grammar.

### Confidence

The key to any exam success is confidence. If you feel happy that you know all you can be expected to know, and how to apply that knowledge, you will be fine. Make the revision process useful for you and **resist comparing yourself** to others. Use all resources available to you to give it your best shot.



Finally, the exam period is what we have all be working towards over the last 5 years. Our Y11s have worked incredibly hard and we have absolute faith that they will gain the outstanding outcomes they deserve.

We wish you all the very best.

Yours sincerely

K. Reynolds  
Deputy Headteacher