

12th October 2017

Dear Parents/Carers,

I am writing to let you know that Year 11 students will be starting their GCSE mock exams on Monday 27 November 2017. Students should come to school as normal each day. If students have no afternoon exam or if the exam finishes early, **they will be able to leave school at lunchtime.**

I am enclosing the exam timetable so that you can see which subjects will be tested on each day. Most exams last 1 ½ hours or 2 hours so the mock exams will be an excellent way for students to build their stamina, as well as their exam skills for GCSE success. The science exams will take place a little later on December 7th. Please note that a second set of mock exams will take place from March 5th 2018 to give students further exam practice.

Your son/daughter has been given a list of topics to revise for these exams. Some staff will issue revision sheets or have already given out study guides. Some teachers will also be sending students emails with links to resources and powerpoints. Teachers may revise with students in lesson times, however, in many subjects students are still completing the course. It is therefore important that students use the half-term, evenings and weekends to revise and consolidate learning from last year.

Please discuss the revision materials with your child and support them in planning their time and organising themselves at home. We are very aware that this can be a stressful time for students, so please can you talk through some of the tips that are set out on the separate sheet.

The students will receive their mock exam results at the end of term with a list of topics and targets they need to work on. So that you have clear information about how your child is progressing we have arranged for the Year 11 Parents' Evening to take place on 10 January, when you will be able to meet with all of your child's teachers. We hope that you will prioritise this important date.

Should you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me or their teachers directly. Should you wish your child to stay on site after the end of exams until the end of the school day, then do please let us know and we will make arrangements for them to be supervised.

Yours faithfully,

Nicolette Sorba
Senior Assistant Headteacher

Staying Healthy During Exams

There is no doubt that this is a stressful time for young people taking exams. Understanding what you need to do and planning your revision time and breaks is important to managing the pressure of the exam period. The key to finding this balance is to be well organised.

Prepare a revision timetable from now until November 27th, breaking your time up into slots for work and others for relaxation. It is very hard to concentrate for longer than 40 minutes at a time so take 15-20 min breaks in between subjects. Below are some other tips to help you stay healthy.

1. Sleep better

- Do not work in your bed. You should associate your bed with relaxation not stress
- Develop a routine; stop work at least an hour before you want to sleep and try and do something relaxing in the meantime. Go to bed and wake up at the same point each day
- If you find yourself awake and worrying about a particular issue, try keeping a note book at the side of the bed to jot these things down to deal with in the morning

2. Stay Active

- Exercising even for 15 minutes a day will make a huge difference to your wellbeing – physical activity increases the heart rate and makes the blood circulate faster. This ensures the brain gets more oxygen which increases productivity and reduces stress and tiredness
- Think about your diet; try to eat fruit and veg every day and remember that a good amount of carbohydrate will give you energy. Also make sure you drink lots of water.
- Use rewards to keep you going; if you achieve your goals give yourself a treat or something to look forward to.

3. Talk About it

- Talk to family members, especially those who may have been through exams recently like older brothers, sister or cousins
- Don't be afraid to talk about how you are feeling with your friends but pick carefully - some people can make you feel worse by giving you even more to worry about
- Why not talk to a member of staff ? They might be able to help you understand why you feel stressed, anxious, etc... and can help with changing your negative thought patterns

4. Think Positively

- Be careful about comparing yourself to others; it's easy to assume everyone else is finding it easy or working 8 hour days but you don't really know how they are feeling or coping
- Don't obsess with the future; look after yourself now and the future will take care of itself
- Don't think in 'all or nothing' terms – these exams are for practice and your aim is to improve and be ready for May, there will be more opportunities to practice
- Be kind to yourself; focus on your strengths and accept that no-one is perfect. If you find you are giving yourself a hard time, imagine what another reasonable, kind person would tell you

Useful websites

Young Minds – <http://www.youngminds.org.uk>

MIND – The Mind infoline is - 0300 123 339