

14th October 2020

Dear Year 11,

GCSE: Support and Guidance

We are now starting to prepare in detail for your GCSE mock examinations that start at the end of November. I would ask you to look on these mock examinations as a real opportunity. They are an opportunity to see your potential and what you can achieve. They are an opportunity to display a positive and can-do attitude. They are an opportunity to celebrate success and identify the areas you need to focus on in time for your final examinations.

Whole school cycle of assessment and reporting to parents

In preparation for the summer GCSE examinations the school will hold 2 mock examination series. The first set of mocks will take place from 30th November to 11th December. The second set of mocks will take place around Easter time, the second set of mock exams will focus on material taught from January 2021 onwards as well as any material that needs to be re-visited from the first set of mock exams. Final GCSE examinations are due to take place from Monday 7th June, with one English paper and one maths paper taking place before the May half-term.

The school is still looking at various options that can run in place of the traditional parents' evening. For Year 11 this evening would normally be in January 2021, and nearer the time we will write to you with arrangements for a remote parents' evening where your parents can have a conversation with your teachers about your work.

Department GCSE Guides

Each department has produced a subject specific guide to their GCSE that explains the structure and content of each exam, explains the removal of content and changes to the assessment due to the Covid-19 lockdown that took place when you were in Year 10. These guides are published on our website and contain hyperlinks to exam board information, revision material and any other relevant information for each particular GCSE. These guides are designed to be the starting point and reference point for all revision. Each Head of Department has made specific recommendations about revision material and which online material is relevant to their subject.

October Half-Term

You will see from the individual departmental guides the work that each department has set as revision homework over the half-term.

Support

The school will support you all the way through your final GCSE year. The first support that we offer is the clarity from each department as set out in the departmental guides. The support continues through assemblies, and although these are delivered remotely, they still provide the focus needed for revision techniques, how to organise work, keeping a balance through the exams, and how to access individual support. The morning 'drop-ins' that operate for the next 6 weeks allow you to have some individual time with your teachers and ask for specific help with anything that you may need. The final layer of support are the revision sessions that will occur over the next 6 weeks, the details of which can be found later in this pack. As I have said in assembly these sessions are planned specifically with your mock examinations in mind and attending these sessions is an important aspect of your mock exam preparation and will help with your own individual preparation for the mock exams.

Individual Support

The school offers many layers of individual support should you need someone to talk to. The first point of contact would be your tutor and your Head of Year. They may be able to help you, or if you need any further opportunity to talk, they can direct you to other support, including our chaplain and the school counsellor. I would really encourage you, if you feel the need to talk, to find a few minutes to see someone; the staff at the school are here to support you and will always take the time to listen to any concerns you may have.

It is important of course that over these next few weeks, and indeed over the whole year, you keep a sense of balance around exam preparation. It is important that you plan your rest and time to 'switch off' just as you would plan your revision. You will find in the information guidance on keeping a healthy approach to sleep, diet, exercise, friendship and prayer.

With every best wish as you prepare for your mock examinations.

Mr Simmons
Deputy Head Teacher