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Thursday 28th March 2024

Dear Parent/Carer,

The next 6 weeks are a crucial time for all of our Year 11 students as the final exam countdown begins. After the Easter break, there are 18 school days until the formal written GCSE examinations begin, with a number of subjects with practical components having their exams prior to this.

As much as the Easter break is an opportunity for students to find time to rest and recharge, these two weeks must feature productive revision and preparation for the GCSE exams. A number of Year 11 students have been attending additional revision sessions before/after school which has been great to see but there are still too many not engaging in enough work at home. All of the research out there proves that additional home learning/revision will positively impact student outcomes and it is not too late to make that difference.

It would be easy to view this message as one that is focussing purely on the results of individual students in August 2024 but a big part of our role is to support our young people to have as many options available to them, to go on to do whatever they want in education, training or the workplace. These options do not just happen and if our young people need to work a little harder at home to give them the greatest chance of success in life, then surely that is a positive step forward. I know that Year 11 have already been working incredibly hard at home on their revision and they will need to continue to do so until the exams finish at the end of June. Then they can look back and say they have done all it takes to give them the right options for them, wherever and whatever that may look like for them.

Throughout this term, we have had many conversations about habits and routines, setting the scene for revision and generally doing all that is possible to be in the best frame of mind to approach school. The below information will be talked through at the Exam Information evening on 30th April 2024 but I thought it was useful to share with you now:

Keeping healthy:

- Sleep: Ensure your child is getting between 8-10 hours of sleep. Work backwards from when they need to get up, set a bedtime. Revising all night is not effective.
- Diet: Ensure your child has a healthy diet.
- Hydration: Keep your child hydrated, a 2% loss in hydration affects memory and work.
- Caffeine: Cut it out – caffeine affects energy levels and your child's sleep.

Revision:

- Revision Plans: Help them make a plan of what they need to revise, and when. Break down their goals into steps.
- Different ways and skills to revise: Explore different ways to revise with your child.
- Ways you can help: Let them recite/repeat what they have learnt to you, or act as their student. Read flash card questions to them

During assessments:

- Preparation: Encourage a good night's sleep before an exam and remind them not to cram.
- Exam timetables: Support in making an exam timetable so they know what they have, when and how long for.
- Support: Stay positive, be present, take an interest in what they're doing, give them a break from chores.

The right home environment:

- Environment: Help them find a calm, quiet and light space away from distractions.
- Routine: Help them stick to their revision timetable, avoid last minute plans.
- Physical exercise: Arrange an outdoor activity to do together. Physical exercise is good for their health and wellbeing.
- Relaxation: Help them build a routine that includes relaxation and time for hobbies.

Managing assessment nerves:

- Spotting the signs: Stress and anxiety is normal over a day or two, but a regular and prolonged change in their behaviour can be sign something is wrong.
- How you can help: Encourage physical activity, listening to music, talking, mediation, laughter, practise breathing techniques
- [Help your child beat exam stress - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

Our top tips:

- Be firm with boundaries.
- Ask them about how school is going.
- Limit screen time. Set screen rules as a family.
- Make sure where they sleep is uncluttered and they get a good night's sleep of 8 to 10 hours.

In order to support students further with their revision opportunities, Year 11 VEB lessons (1 hour per week) will now be dedicated to independent revision. Students are expected to bring appropriate revision with them but we will also have resources available for core subjects and will aim to have all lessons based in computer rooms, so that students can access sites such as BBC Bitesize, Seneca, GCSE Pod. There remains an expectation that students are focused within these sessions and it is not to be viewed as an hour to catch up with friends.

On Friday 24th May, Year 11 students will have their Leaver's Assembly at approximately 11.45-12.30 at which point they will leave the school site to go home. This coincides with the start of the half term break but when students return, they will be following an alternative study timetable which will be issued in due course. The basic premise of this is that students will only be in school if they have an exam or a pre-exam revision session.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all your support so far and remind you to please contact myself or Mrs Morgan if you have any concerns for your child/ren. All of the school's expectations around attendance, uniform, behaviour and attitudes remain in place until students complete their final exam. Please reinforce with your child that time spent dealing with poor behaviour choices/conflict is energy being wasted which should be directed to revision and ensuring they are as successful as they can be over the final months of school.

Key dates for your diary:

Year 11 Celebration Evening: 25th April 2024 (invite only which will be issued separately)

Exam information evening: 30th April 2024

Sixth Form Induction Day: 1st July 2024

Year 11 prom: 4th July 2024

I look forward to seeing many of you at the Exam Information Evening on **Tuesday 30th April 2024.**

Yours Faithfully

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Miss E Huet

Assistant Headteacher-Director of KS4