

Our ref: ljm/KDV/Correspondence

09 May 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Year 11 Summer Exam Season

As we rapidly approach the formal exams, I wanted to confirm our final arrangements and dates, as well as outlining some key differences to this year's exams that were confirmed by Ofqual this morning. For us working in school lots of this can seem obvious but over this exam season, which is stressful for both students and parents, I thought it would be useful to have the key information in one place.

2023 Exam Series

The grading of the exams in 2023 will return to levels seen in 2019. As you will know there was grade inflation during the pandemic when the exams had to be cancelled and there was no standard way of awarding the grades. Last year the percentage of the higher grades available was greater than in 2019 but lower than those awarded in 2021. It will therefore be more difficult to achieve the same grades this year than last year. However, we have known this since last year and our assessments across the last two years for your child have reflected this so there is no need to worry that they have been over predicted. This grading will affect all students nationally so will not affect access to further study, apprenticeships, etc.

The formal written exam series begins on Monday 15th May 2023, but each student will have their own personal examination timetable depending on their subjects of study. Exams will start at either 09:00 or 13:30 and it is important that students are in school at least thirty minutes ahead of the start time so they can settle prior to the exam starting. Students need to arrive at the exam room at least fifteen minutes before the start time so that the instructions can be given, and exam papers checked allowing students to begin on time. Watches and mobile phones are banned from all exams and should be left at home, switched off in their bag, with the invigilators or stored in a locker. Clear plastic water bottles are allowed in the exam hall as long as the label is removed. These rules are in place nationally, to avoid students cheating. Students who are found to have these items may be disqualified from their exams, so it is important they do not take prohibited items into the exam. Students have had a number of mock exams so will know where they need to be when they arrive. Equipment will not be loaned out during exams so please ensure your child has the following equipment stored in a clear plastic pencil case for their exams:

- Multiple black pens (in case one breaks or runs out)
- Sharp pencil
- Rubber
- Ruler
- Highlighter
- Calculator (no lid)
- Protractor
- Compass (with pencil)
- Clear water bottle with no labels on it
- Lanyard – this is required for checking your ID – it must not be defaced in any way, otherwise you need to buy a new one from Reception

Students in Year 11 should be in full uniform, and all students (as above) should bring their college lanyard with them so their identity can be checked by the exam invigilators. The exam contingency day is on Wednesday 28th June 2023. This is the very last day of exams and will be used if there are any issues with any of the papers or exams. Students need to be available until 28th June just in case this date needs to be used.

The End of the 2022/2023 Academic Year

Students in Year 11 will be required to be in school as normal until Thursday 8th June 2023. On Thursday 8th June 2023, after the morning lessons and exams, there will be the leavers assembly and there will be no more lessons on that day for students. We are aiming to have this assembly completed by lunchtime. From Friday 9th June, students in Year 11 should come to school when they have an exam or when they have a lesson in a subject they have not yet completed. Students in Year 11 will need to be available until 28th June in case the exam contingency day is required.

2023 Results Days

We will be holding face to face results days where members of staff will be on hand to celebrate the many successes and to support any students who have not performed as they had hoped. Staff will be able to advise on alternative College options. More information will come to you closer to the time, but students will be invited onto site during the morning on Thursday 24th August 2023.

Supporting Your Child

There is a huge amount of information on the internet about how to support your child during exams but the two most important things that a parent can do is to help their child revise and to keep them healthy.

It is always best to revise little and often rather than cramming because the brain is limited in what it can process and what it can remember. Finding your child somewhere quiet and away from distraction to revise for at least 30-60 minutes a day, in 15 minutes chunks is really helpful. Students should focus on trying to remember things rather than just spending all of their time re-reading work. You can support by telling your child to produce flash cards, mind maps, knowledge organisers or exam style answers from memory after they have done some revision. Testing your child with questions from a revision guide or from a past exam paper at the end of their revision, is another really good way to support your child in remembering more. The more your child can remember, the more marks and the higher the grades they will get in their exams.

It is easy for students to become overwhelmed without a plan, so supporting your child in their revision will really help them with their stress levels and mental health. Ensuring they are getting enough good quality sleep, are staying well fed, and hydrated during the exams is equally important so that they are feeling fit, healthy, and well rested while they revise and sit their exams. Sometimes simply being heard can help with stress too, so always take the time to listen to your child when they are airing their concerns, frustrations, or challenges. If you are concerned about the health of your child, it is important that you contact either your child's Head of Year or in more severe cases, your local GP to ensure your child is supported to do the best they can.

In School Support

Throughout the year we have put on a huge number of extra sessions and support activities for your child, and we will continue to do so as we enter the exam period. Mrs Camp has today emailed your child with this information and some extra sessions, but I wanted to flag this up to you also:

- The library is open for Year 11 from 8:00am every morning
- The library is available just for Year 11 Wednesday, Thursday and Friday lunchtimes as a quiet place to revise

- Free breakfast is available from the canteen 8.00am – 8.25am for students before their exams
- We will continue after school and registration interventions and will begin breakfast revision sessions before key exams. Each of these is specific to your child but they will know which sessions they should be attending and when.

Our students and staff have really benefitted from all the support you have given as parents/carers, particularly over the last few years with all the disruption caused by the pandemic. I know that you will do all you can to support your child through the first set of full, final exams and please trust that we are doing the same in school. If you have any further questions, concerns or requests please do contact your child's Head of Year.

Kind regards,

Mr. K Vernon
Head Teacher