

Monday 27th April 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian

Re: KS3 Assessments – Year 9

I hope you are bearing up in the lockdown with your teenager/s and there are some unexpected positives with the situation.

We have decided to go ahead with the Key Stage 3 assessments, which will be done remotely. Year 10 are taking their assessments over the next two weeks so we will learn what works well and where we need to adapt even more in setting them remotely. We don't know when schools will open so whilst at home, the assessments will keep your daughter focused, plus, revising at home can be easier than learning new content – so is a good use of time.

The assessments would normally have taken place after half term but we feel that setting them the week before half term will mean that your daughter can relax over half term and if we are back in school at some point in the summer term teachers can crack on with teaching content rather than setting end of year tests

The marks from these assessments will contribute to an overall grade for each subject for the summer review, taking into account all the work your daughter completed over the last two terms at school before lockdown. We will not base any setting for next year solely on these assessments, as we are fully aware that conditions are not always favourable.

We recognise that taking assessments at home is not going to be a smooth process for students, teachers and parents and we have mitigated for some of the problems as explained below. Here is the plan:

Dates

- The assessments will follow the timetable below and they will take place over the week beginning 18th May.

Week A	Session 1 9am-10.30am	Session 2 11.30-1pm	Session 3 1.30-3pm
Monday 18th May	POR	MFL	
Tuesday 19th May	History	Geography	
Wednesday 20th May	Technology/Food/Textiles	Maths	
Thursday 21st May	Music	Science	
Friday 22nd May	Computing	English	Art

- Your daughter will be set structured revision tasks for two weeks before the assessments starting next week instead of learning new content in lessons.
- **Year 7, 8 and 9 teachers will not set any lessons for the duration of the assessment week.** Your daughter just needs to do the assessments for that day and revise for the assessments for the following day. We do not anticipate that she will do more than 2 hours approximately for the assessments (2 x 1 hour) and then 2 hours revision per day.

Format of exams

- All Year 7,8 and 9 students have **access to Word through Microsoft 365** ...which means that they can send word docs to teachers, which are easier to mark using “tracked changes”. If your daughter does not have Word, she can download it. I have attached a help sheet but any problems please email homestudy@holt.wokingham.sch.uk.
- Teachers will set straight forward papers so they are more manageable to mark remotely...they may include multiple choice questions and more shorter answers to test for knowledge.
- They will be up to 1 hour long.
- There will be clear instructions on the front cover including to whom your daughter needs to send their completed paper.
- Teachers have written revision lists in the ‘What to Revise List’ – see attached.
- If your daughter has left her class exercise book in school and cannot find information on the internet e.g. BBC Bitesize, she needs to email her class teacher.

The day of the assessment

- Your daughter should do it on the day, but realistically we know some girls are sharing laptops and some are in busy households - so they may have to wait until the evening to do it in the peace and quiet. Students will have two full days to send the completed assessment back to their class teacher. They need to read the instructions on the front sheet.
- For students who have not sent the paper back within 48 hours – we will be in touch with you to chase up.

Marking and feedback

This is a new challenge for sure! Staff are discussing this week how best to mark and give feedback remotely and we will learn from the Year 10 exams.

We envisage that feedback could be

- individual feedback using tracked changes/comments and returned with mark scheme
- whole class feedback, using a master feedback sheet with all the misconceptions made by class and returned to your daughter with the mark scheme and her script.

Assessment conditions at home

We would really appreciate it if you could support your daughter taking these assessments with the following

- Checking each day that the correct papers have been sent to her. Any problems email homestudy@holt.wokingham.sch.uk
- Ensuring she has Word on her laptop
- Ensuring she has a comfortable place to do the exam in the house
- Ensuring it is quiet and your daughter is free from disturbances for the duration of the exam and no access to her mobile phone
- You could give the start and finish time...with a 10-minute warning before the finish time.
- Ensuring she is not tempted to look up her notes/books.
- Making sure your daughter saves her assessment paper ...she should save as she goes along...and sends it straight away to her teacher.

These assessments provide a good opportunity for your daughter to develop her revision skills and reflect on which methods work best

Your daughter should try to use different active revision methods such as mind maps of particular topics or making flashcards. It is important that your daughter quizzes herself or gets you to test her once she has written out revision cards or mind maps. It is the understanding, then memorizing (look, cover, write and check) and finally recall through quizzing that helps content stick!

By starting to revise from next week, through structured revision lessons, it will help to ensure that your daughter is prepared and avoids last minute panics. She should try to study at a table with no distractions and parents in the past have said that looking after their daughter's mobile phone whilst they revise has been helpful in allowing them to concentrate. This also creates good habits for the future. There are many ways parents can help such as providing a quiet environment and supplying drinks and snacks at regular intervals in order to give words of encouragement as well as check on progress. If you have the time, you could ask your daughter to 'teach you' what she has learnt – this is another method of revision – to check understanding and helps with recall. Every student approaches their revision in a different way and these assessments will help them to see which methods work best for them. Finally, it is vital you praise your daughter's effort rather than the results achieved...so before the assessments start maybe give her a treat to acknowledge the effort she has put into revising.

By the time your daughter sits her GCSEs she will have developed strategies on how to prepare and cope with linear exams, which cover the content from two years of study in two to three hours of exams. Consequently, it is good to train her early on how to revise different subjects, where some need a lot of memorisation, others require practising questions and of course the importance of reading the exam questions and interpreting them correctly. This all comes with practice and if your daughter has prepared for the assessments she can learn from the feedback she receives from her marked assessments. After the assessments, Heads of Year will do an assembly (if we are back in school) or write to their year group on how to deal with disappointment if results are poorer than expected and how to bounce back by taking on board feedback e.g. reading the questions or explaining their point in more detail.

Please do not hesitate to contact your daughter's Head of Year if you have any queries regarding these assessments.

Year 9 Mrs N Thomas

Year9team@holt.wokingham.sch.uk

If your daughter has special exam access arrangements for SEN or medical reasons, Mrs Griffiths, SENCO, will be in touch with you.

Please do email homestudy@holt.wokingham.sch.uk if you have any queries.

Thank you so much for your support and good luck to your daughters. I will write them a separate email outlining the above.

Take care.

Yours sincerely



Mrs V Martin
Assistant Headteacher