

18th March 2019

Dear Parent/Guardian

Re: Year 10 Assessment week and GCSE examinations

As you are aware, all Year 10 students have upcoming GCSE examinations in Philosophy of Religion on 13th and 20th May. All students have been given exam entry slips for these exams.

Furthermore, all Year 10 students will have assessments in all of their subjects between 30th April and 10th May. These assessments will take place under GCSE exam conditions in the Hall or Gym during lesson time over the fortnight.

Over the Easter holidays, it is important that your daughter takes this opportunity for a well-earned rest, but this needs to be balanced with some revision; if she starts now and plans the equivalent of two to three hours a day during the holiday, and then continues revising and consolidating over the two week assessment period, she should feel in control and well prepared. Please encourage your daughter to plan a revision timetable which is realistic, so that she is able to stick to it. This will help her organise herself, and ensure that she covers all the necessary material in plenty of time.

Your daughter will have attended assemblies where revision methods have been discussed and, on either Friday 22nd March or Monday 25th March, all students will participate in a study skills session. Students will learn about how the memory works and the best ways to build up their long-term memory. The session will cover how to write revision notes, different ways to recall and retrieve information such as self-quizzing, how to use a mark scheme to help with revision, and how to set up a revision schedule.

Purchasing A3 paper, revision cards and coloured pens can help with motivation, but we will remind girls that rewriting class notes is just the first part of revision. The vital stage is the embedding of the content into the long-term memory, through self-quizzing, such as answering questions created by your daughter to test the content, using the look/cover/check method, or working with other students by explaining topics to each other or to a family member. Self-testing and explaining to others will sharpen up your daughter's recall skills far more effectively than passively reading, rewriting and highlighting notes repeatedly.

By starting to revise now, your daughter will ensure that she is prepared and avoid last minute panics. She should try to study at a table with no distractions, and parents in the past have said that holding onto their daughter's mobile phone whilst they revise has been helpful in allowing them to fully concentrate. There are lots of ways parents can help such as providing a quiet environment and supplying drinks and snacks at regular intervals along with words of encouragement as well as checking on progress. If you have the time, you could ask your daughter to 'teach you' what she has learnt – this is another very successful method of revision.

Every student approaches their revision in a different way, but they need to regularly come back to what they have revised in order to consolidate their learning. Each time they go over the information again they will be strengthening the pathway to access that memory.

We have compiled a 'What to Revise Booklet' for the Year 10 girls to refer to in preparation for their exams. The booklet is quite long, so you should only print off those pages relevant to the subjects your daughter is studying. It may be easier if your daughter saves the document to a PC or laptop if possible for ease of reference so she can prioritise what she has to learn during the Easter break and use the booklet to check off what she has revised. Please click on the following link to access the booklet –

https://www.holtschool.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Letters_and_Announcements/REVISION%20LIST%20FOR%20Year%2010%20-%20March%202019%20for%20Summer%20term%20Gri.pdf

Your daughter should use her exercise book and textbook to help revise too. It is perfectly natural for students to feel more stress and anxiety in the build up to exams, in fact a bit of stress is very good for their motivation to revise. Our mental health colleagues often remind us that avoidance feeds anxiety – where the risk is that students may leave their revision too late and thus feel overwhelmed. From experience the students that cope best are those who pace out their revision; they plan a schedule, are focused in the set times for revision and relax at other times. Cramming is not recommended...it is much better to go for the steady long-term approach to revision with the new linear GCSE exams. The purpose of these Year 10 exams is to support the girls in their revision techniques and learn those that are effective and those that are not. They will have another set of PPEs in January of Year 11 so there is time to practise and learn from mistakes as well as successes ready for summer 2020.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries regarding these assessments or if you are worried that your daughter is more stressed than typical. I am here to help.

Yours sincerely



Mrs E Griffiths
Acting Head of Year 10