

7th May 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian

Re: Year 12 Pre Public Exams (PPE) – Monday 15 June – Friday 19th June 2020

We have decided to go ahead with the Year 12 PPEs, so another new experience – online assessments! The PPEs will keep students focused and the revision process will strengthen their long-term memory and so make things easier next year. Moreover, it is vital that we continue to assess your son/daughter's progress in their subjects to enable us to support them to ensure they achieve their very best next summer.

We are fully aware that conditions have been difficult over the last few weeks especially in understanding and learning new content. When we decide on your son/daughter's summer projected grade, we will take into account his/her PPE mark as well as marks from assessments from the last two terms when school was open. I have attached our UCAS predicted grade guidance, which explains how we decide on your son/daughter's UCAS grade which is derived from the summer projected grade. It might be that Year 12 are back in school in mid-June and if so, we will change the arrangements outlined below accordingly but the dates for the PPEs will be the same. We will see what the Prime Minister says on Sunday about the relaxation of the lockdown and the reopening of schools.

If students do take assessments at home, we know that it will not be a completely smooth process for students, teachers and parents. We have mitigated for some of the problems as explained below. Here is the plan:

Dates

- The PPEs will follow the timetable attached....so will last for one week **15 June – 19 June**. Your son/daughter will be sent an individual timetable in the next day.
- **Year 12 teachers will not set any lessons for the duration of the exam.**
- Some students will have clashes but as we are giving a 48-hour window to complete the papers, these students can work around the clashes.

Format of exams

- All Year 12 students have **access to Word through Microsoft 365**....which means that they can send Word documents to teachers, which are easier to mark using "tracked" changes. By now, your son/daughter should be adept at using MS Teams.
- Teachers will reformat the exam papers so that it is more manageable to mark remotely....probably turning PDF papers into Word and if students need to draw diagrams, write complicated mathematical formulae and so on we envisage that students will do it by hand on paper indicating the question number, take a photo and upload with the rest of the paper.
- Teachers will give clear instructions on the front cover.
- The papers will be set so they take the time allocated for the exam as per exam timetable. Formatting, uploading etc is all in addition to the allocated time.

The day of the exam

- Mrs Cross, Exams Manager, will send out the relevant exam paper and any essential attachments, eg inserts, sound files etc to your son/daughter on the day of the exam. Even if it is an afternoon exam, she will send them in the morning.
- Your son/daughter should do it on the day, but realistically we know some students 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 script back to their class teacher, not to Mrs Cross. They need to read the instructions on the front sheet.
- For students who have not sent the paper back within 48 hours – I will be in touch with you to chase up.

Marking and feedback

Staff are refining their skills in marking and giving feedback remotely. The methods will differ across subjects. 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 son/daughter with the mark scheme and her script.

Exam conditions at home

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

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

In order to enrol for Year 13 studies, students must successfully achieve a pass in all of their subjects. If your son/daughter receives a U grade result in their June PPE they will have to re-sit the exam on Monday 6th July. The exam will be marked immediately and the result communicated within 48 hours. If they receive another U grade result this strongly suggests that your son/daughter is unable to cope with the demands of the A Level and that it may be better to look at alternative options. I will arrange to meet with you and we can discuss all the options. Every year this happens to a small number of students and after the initial uncertainty, they go on to successfully take courses that are more appropriate at college.

Over the next five weeks, leading up to these exams it is important that your son/daughter starts to plan in revision sessions; if they start now and plan their time carefully, they should feel in control and well prepared. Please encourage your son/daughter to plan a revision timetable, which is realistic so that they are able to stick to it. This will help them to organise themselves and ensure that they cover all the necessary material in plenty of time.

The key to effective revision at A level is to understand the content, write out revision notes covering all aspects of the specification and to learn them. I hope that your son/daughter will still have notes from the first term as they prepared for the January PPEs. They need to learn the content by literally using the look, cover, write and check method (remember those spelling tests in Year 3 and 4!). To strengthen their long-term memory it is good to revisit content through recall and retrieval. This means self-quizzing, rewriting notes without looking after a period has lapsed from actually making the notes and of course using past papers for retrieval and honing in on exam technique. After recall and retrieval, it is good that they check for content they have forgotten and going back over their notes – this really helps the long-term memory. Practising past papers in timed conditions is good too. Probably the skill that has been the hardest to teach remotely in some subjects is exam technique but we can work on this in Year 13. It is important to have a good understanding and recall of content as well, which all students can work on now. Past papers, examiners reports and subject specific websites are all helpful in compiling notes, finding revision activities and practising past questions.

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

Please do email homestudy@holt.wokingham.sch.uk if you have any queries and in the subject heading write FAO Mrs Bellis Year 12PPEs.

I have sent a powerpoint to your son/daughter with hints and tips on what to think about when choosing a university course and when shortlisting universities as well as a powerpoint from Mrs Hart on apprenticeships. There is plenty of time but your son/daughter should be thinking about their post 18 options this term to avoid a rush in the Autumn term. Mrs Hart sent an email yesterday to explain how your son/daughter registers on 'UniPro' – we have subscribed to this excellent post 18-information portal run by Trotman.

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

Yours sincerely

J. Bellis

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