

6th February 2019

Dear Parent/Guardian

Re: Year 11 – Post PPEs

You will be receiving your daughter's review on Wednesday 6th February with the PPE grades and projected grades for the summer, which are based on your daughter's attitude, class work, home learning, assessment results and the PPE result. This is a good time to reflect on the PPEs and plan with your daughter on how best to prepare over the next 15 weeks (inc Feb half term and two weeks at Easter) up to the start of study leave which starts on Friday 10th May.

I hope that your daughter feels reassured with her PPE grades and that they reflected the amount of preparation that she put into them. If she is feeling some disappointment or worry, it is important to reassure her that this is an interim point and the grades she achieves in the summer generally go up by at least one grade if she prepares thoroughly in the next few weeks.

Subject teachers are now on the final topics before finishing the specification and they will be interleaving revision of previous topics and exam technique into their lessons. For the majority of subjects, knowing content is not enough to gain the higher grades. The exam boards are looking for specific skills and approaches to answering questions which is why it is so important that your daughter attends all her lessons up until the exam period to gain valuable advice and practice in exam questions. This term is busy with language orals and NEAs (Non-Examined Assessments) in some subjects, which is another reason for having a plan in how to use time in and out of school to prepare for the GCSEs. I have reminded all of Year 11 to check their emails daily as staff often email girls to arrange to meet to go over an aspect of their learning or to give an update on NEA progress. Of course, students are also welcome to email their teachers if they have a query or want to arrange to meet to go over something.

I am sure that your daughter will now have a large bank of revision notes and flash cards as well as a revision timetable to help her structure her weekday and weekend revision. However, now that she has a good grasp of knowledge and content, you daughter should move on to refining her recall and memory retrieval skills. This is best done by using past papers where they are available, practice exercises in textbooks, self-quizzing or working in small groups teaching each other. It is this more active form of revision through memory retrieval that will help her prepare the most. If you see your daughter rewriting beautiful revision notes for the second or third time, as hard as it is, she needs to stop and move on to the recall and retrieval stage of revision. Teachers will continue to set relevant home learning in preparations for the exams. Sometimes students say they have no time to revise because they are still being set home learning. We remind our girls that they need to be flexible enough to adjust their revision plans so it fits in with the revision the teacher has set for home learning. By continuing to set home learning teachers are able to give feedback which students should be eager for as this is how they will receive personalised information on how to continue to improve as well as feel reassured that their efforts are paying off.

I have attached a list of the support available to students at lunchtimes and after school for different subjects. If your daughter is invited, we would be grateful if you could encourage her to attend and for the other sessions, your daughter is very welcome to go along as some girls find the extra sessions useful. Please talk to your daughter about which sessions she thinks she would benefit from the most and encourage her attendance. It is a bit of a treadmill up to the exams but no more so than in the last few decades (except that parents are more aware and social media exacerbates the stress felt by students and parents) so it is important that your daughter paces herself. A couple of hours study on weekdays (including home learning set) and at weekends, often girls set aside 5-6 hours to consolidate their revision. It is important that family routines, mealtimes, regular activities and sport are maintained but planned around the revision using a timetable (with built in flexibility ie catch up time on missed sessions) so that both you and your daughter feel in control and have an agreed plan that you are able to support her with.

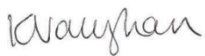
There is no easy way through the exam period; it is likely to be a difficult time not only for your daughter but for you as parents too. The girls only have one chance to get their GCSE grades so accessing as much help at school as they can and putting in the hours of preparation at home that is needed is really important. The support from you with gentle nagging, being ready with drinks, snacks, offers to quiz/test and a hug definitely makes a difference.

The Prom brings light relief amongst all the revision! Year 11 will attend their Leavers' Assembly in the morning of Friday 28th June and go onto the Prom that evening.

We have also had the National Citizenship Service (NCS) visit to do two assemblies to promote the opportunities the scheme offers this summer. The three week programme is a great way of filling the many weeks of holiday while still leaving plenty of time for family holidays, catching up on rest and watching back to back Netflix (!) after these few months of hard work.

We are now in to the final push and with the support that the girls are receiving from staff at school and from you, all the hard work will be worth it in the end when they collect their results on Thursday 22nd August. If you have any concerns or questions please feel free to contact me by email on either k.vaughan@holt.wokingham.sch.uk or year11team@holt.wokingham.sch.uk

Yours sincerely



Mrs Katie Vaughan
Head of Year 11