

March 2018

Dear Parent/Guardian

**Re: Year 10 Assessment week and GCSE examinations**

As you are aware all Year 10 students have an upcoming real GCSE examination in Philosophy of Religion on 14th and 16th May. All students have been given exam entry slips for these exams.

Furthermore, all Year 10 students will have assessments in their subjects between 30th April and 11th May. These assessments will take place under GCSE exam conditions in the Hall or Gym during lesson time over the fortnight. Those students taking Health and Social Care as an option do not have an exam but will have internally assessed assignments that contribute to their final BTEC mark. Assignment 1 runs from 17th April - 1st May and Assignment 2 from the 21st May – 2nd July. Please ask your daughter to check her timetable carefully so that she knows when each of her assessments takes place.

Over the Easter holidays it is important that your daughter is able to take 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 23rd March or Monday 26th 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 finally 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 re writing 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, or use the look/cover/check method, working with other students by explaining to each other topics 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 will help to ensure that your daughter 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 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 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.

Attached with this letter is a revision list for all the different subjects and your daughter can use this to check off what she has revised. Your daughter should use her exercise book and text book 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 from 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 2019.

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 K Vaughan,  
Head of Year 10