



## Exam preparation

Dear Parent/Carer

As you are aware the Year 13 mock exams will be taking place during the first two weeks back after Christmas, starting from the 4 January. Understandably, students can feel anxious in the run up to the mock exams. In this letter, I would like to share with you some of the information and messages that we have been giving to your child about their final seven months in Year 13.

### Attendance

Attendance between now and the final exams is crucial to ensure that your child not only has as much teaching contact with their teachers as possible, but also to ensure they are privy to essential exam practice. There is a strong link correlation between attendance and success in final exams. The table below shows the attendance of two Year 13 students last year and their final grades.

	<b>Overall attendance</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Subject attendance</b>	<b>Final grades</b>
<b>Student 1</b>	72.5%	Business	76%	C
		Maths	64%	U
		Physics	71%	U
<b>Student 2</b>	98.4%	Biology	94%	B
		Chemistry	96%	A
		Maths	97%	A*

It is clear that low attendance has a significant impact on final grades as missed lessons creates knowledge gaps. These gaps in knowledge become quickly apparent to students and puts students under even more pressure to catch up. By February, all courses will be completed and your child will follow a programme of revision during their lessons. The lessons will contain essential exam practice in preparation for the final exams.

### Effective revision strategies

Throughout their time in the Sixth Form, students have been taught what constitutes effective and ineffective revision strategies. Often the easiest strategies prove to be the most ineffective. The following have all been proven by research to have little or no impact on learning:

- Rereading
- Copying notes
- Summarising
- Highlighting key words

The two most effective revision strategies are testing and spacing coupled with good motivation and organisation. Research shows that students who test themselves regularly remember significantly more information and are less likely to suffer from the negative effects of stress associated with exams.

Students have been told that although testing and spacing out their testing may feel uncomfortable and more difficult than other strategies, they are the most effective. Further information on these strategies can be found [here](#).

## **Organisation**

As a school we are fully aware of the link between disorganisation and anxiety and during the run up to the mocks and final exams, students need to be calm and in control. At the start of term we gave students the time to plan out their directed study and create a plan of what their days would look like to ensure that they have time to complete the work set. Having a plan reduces the anxiety of not knowing and ensures that students are in control of their own day. During directed study we are encouraging students to plan out their time to ensure that they are as effective as possible. All teachers when setting homework provide time limits for the different tasks. This is to ensure that students do not spend a disproportionate amount of time on one task and then become anxious and rush to complete the other tasks. Please speak with your child about these timings and support them to keep within the time limits set.

## **Holiday work expectations**

The courses that your child are following, whether it be an A level or BTEC, are extensive and as such require students to be working at a high level over the full 18 months of the course. Cramming for an A level or a BTEC exam is not possible due to the amount of knowledge required. The homework tasks that your child are set incorporate both Year 12 and Year 13 content. This enables students to revise throughout the course and again reduces the anxiety and stress linked to exams. With the mock exams beginning in January, it is expected that your child will spend time during the holidays on the work set by their teachers. All work set over the Christmas holiday will be targeted preparation for the mock exams. We understand that this may be unpopular with students, however, this preparatory work completed over the holidays will ensure that the mock exams pass without increased stress caused by lack of revision and preparation.

## **Common mistakes**

Finally, this [link](#) highlights the most common mistakes that students make during their studies and when revising for exams. We have discussed these with your child on numerous occasions and we would urge you to do the same to ensure they don't fall into the same traps.

Please see the attached mock timetable.

If you have any questions or queries, please do not hesitate to contact me on [cwatson@tdms.worcs.sch.uk](mailto:cwatson@tdms.worcs.sch.uk).

Yours sincerely



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