

25 November 2020

Confirmation of plans for VI form exams

Dear Year 12 and 13 Parents / Carers and students

I am writing to share with you the confirmed plans for January examinations in the sixth form.

Given the continued national and local restrictions, we have very carefully considered what is the best plan for both Y12 and Y13, taking into account their wellbeing and the need for departments to have robust data should they be required to once again offer a centre assessed grade.

I stress that, at present, we have received no greater guidance around the summer 2021 examination series than the current plan to have exams as normal, albeit starting a little later to maximise time in the classroom. However, reflecting on the experience of last summer, we have considered the internal examinations with a 'what if' mentality, considering all possible situations that we may face with continued impact from the pandemic on students' learning so that we are able to secure for all students the grades that are most reflective of their achievement and capacity.

Year 13

Students in our Year 13 cohort will have internal examinations between 11 and 22 January. An examination timetable will be shared shortly. The previous week (5-8 January) Year 13 will not be expected in school and no lessons will be running. This is to support students in their preparations and to protect their Christmas holiday so that they are able to properly rest and reenergise during the break. Some departments may run one off examination preparation sessions during the week beginning 4 January and these will be accessible on Google Meet.

Departments will be sharing with students imminently the plan for their Y13 examination so that students can start preparing as soon as possible. Staff have been asked to keep all examinations under two hours, however some subjects may require multiple papers. Students will also receive guidance as to what will be assessed to reduce their revision load. We recognise that this means the internal exams are not an exact replica of the expected summer examination however, at this time, we must balance the wellbeing and mental health of students and we value that above imposing a level of academic rigour that would be overwhelming for many at this time. We also believe that with a possible two hour paper, completed under examination conditions, it will be possible to assess students' skills and knowledge in a meaningful way, which in turn allows staff to consider appropriate intervention moving forward.

Year 12

Students in our Year 12 cohort will also have internal examinations between 11 and 22 January. An examination timetable will be shared shortly. The previous week (5-8 January) Year 12 will not be expected in school and no lessons will be running. We are acutely aware that for many students in the year group, the last formal examinations they sat were GCSE mock exams last January. It is therefore important that we remind students of the study skills required to revise and prepare for a formal examination. This will also allow staff to consider how best to support their A level studies moving forward.

Students will be assessed on their learning from September in all of their A level subjects. The examinations will require students to engage with A level style assessment however, given the limited content covered, the assessments will model, rather than strictly replicate, A level examination material. Staff will explain to students clearly the format of their assessment this term to aid their preparation.

Information for all sixth formers

The LRC will be open from the 5 January and students are welcome to prepare for their exams on site. Please note, there will be no Sixth Form Cafe facilities from the 5 - 22 January so if students are on site they must bring their own refreshments.

If a student is unwell during the examination fortnight, they should not attend and a plan will be made to allow them to sit the examination once fully recovered and able to perform to the best of their ability.

Please also be reminded that these internal exams are just one element of the ongoing assessment of student attainment and progress that starts at the very beginning of Year 12 and continues until the final weeks of Year 13. The formality of these assessments is helpful in preparing students for the conditions of their final examinations however they must be kept in perspective as one point of data collection amongst all other assessments, tests, quizzes and essays that students complete throughout their A level study.

The pastoral team are available to support any student at this time with any concerns, whether personal, academic or a combination. The bravest of people ask for help when needed and I would strongly urge any student feeling overwhelmed or worried about the January exams to speak to their tutor, Mr Ackland or myself so that we can offer advice and guidance.

Best wishes,



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