



Diocese of St. Albans



ST MARY'S  
CE HIGH SCHOOL

October 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

**Year 11 Pre Public Examinations (PPE's) – Monday 9th – Friday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

Please find attached the details regarding the Year 11 PPE's (Pre-Public Examinations).

For the majority of students, examinations will take place between Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> November and Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2020. However, if your son or daughter studies Hospitality and Catering, Art or Textiles, their examination timetable is extended from the 9<sup>th</sup> -20<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

During this fortnight, students who are not taking examinations will continue to attend lessons with their teachers but will be able to revise. Students must bring revision materials to their lessons in order to support their revision to ensure they are prepared for their examinations.

It is essential that these examinations are used by students as an opportunity to consolidate their understanding and to refine revision and examination techniques. The results of the exams will also be used, alongside other data and student level information, to inform tiers of entry for summer examinations, re-set classes and inform targeted interventions for students and **potentially be used to support the awarding of Centre Assessed Grades should we need to go into partial or full lockdown as a result of COVID19**. They will also be used as key indicators of student performance in the GCSE Summer Exams, **and will inform predicted grades for upcoming Sixth Form and College applications and interviews.**

**It is essential that every student performs to their potential in these examinations.** It is expected therefore that all students, to maximise their chance of success, use the upcoming weeks to prepare themselves fully by revising each of the topics covered to date as part of their GCSE courses. Attached is a booklet detailing ways in which you can support your child with revision. The booklet also contains summary information about the content of the examinations for each subject.

Please encourage your child to take these examinations seriously and support them by helping them to devise a revision timetable to manage their study time across all subjects.

**During the examinations, when students are not sitting an exam, they will remain in school, where they will be allowed to revise in their normal timetabled lessons supported by their teachers.**

Thank you in anticipation of your full support.

Yours faithfully

*S Tilbury*

Mr S Tilbury  
Deputy Head Teacher

*E Watts*

Mrs E Watts  
Deputy Head Teacher

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## Timetable for Y11 Pre Public Examinations

Students will generally sit one to two exams per day and this will mirror what they have to experience in the summer. Please check the exam timetable against your son/daughters teaching timetable to ensure that you are both aware of what exams occur on each day.

*\*The Sport Science Exam is a practice exam for selected students (you will be notified separately if students are sitting this exam)*

The Hospitality and Catering practical examination is a fully assessed examination and will count towards students' final examination grade.

Week 1	Location	Start 08.50am	Location	Start 12.50
<b>*Monday 9<sup>th</sup> Nov</b>	AR1/2 TE4&5 TE9	<b>Art &amp; Design</b> - All Day (5 hours) <b>Hospitality and Catering</b> - All Day (5 hours) <b>Textiles</b> - All Day (5 hours)		
<b>*Tuesday 10 Nov</b>	AR1/2 TE4&5 TE9	<b>Art &amp; Design</b> - All Day (5 hours) <b>Hospitality and Catering</b> - All Day (5 hours) <b>Textiles</b> - All Day (5 hours)		
	Location	Start 08.50am	Location	Start 12.50
<b>Wed 11 Nov</b>	Sports Hall and Gym	<b>Business</b> 2 hours	Sports Hall and Gym	<b>ICT</b> 1 hour <b>Computer Science</b> 1 hour 30 mins
<b>Thurs 12 Nov</b>	Sports Hall and Gym	<b>Mathematics:</b> (non calc) 1 hour 30 mins	Sports Hall and Gym	<b>Drama</b> 1 hour 15 mins
<b>Fri 13 Nov</b>	Sports Hall and Gym	<b>English Language</b> 1 hour 45 mins	Sports Hall and Gym	<b>Sport Science</b> 1 hour
Week 2	Location	Start 08.50	Location	Start 11.20
<b>Mon 16 Nov</b>	Sports Hall and Gym	<b>Triple Science</b> 1 hour 30 mins <b>Combined Science</b> 1 hour 30 mins	Sports Hall and Gym	<b>French</b> 2 hours <b>Spanish</b> 2 hours
<b>Tues 17 Nov</b>	Sports Hall and Gym	<b>Geography</b> 1 hour	Sports Hall and Gym	<b>English Literature</b> 1 hour 45 mins
<b>Wed 18 Nov</b>	Sports Hall and Gym	<b>Product Design</b> 1 hour <b>Music</b> 1 hour	Sports Hall and Gym	<b>Religious Studies</b> 1 hour 30 mins
<b>Thurs 19 Nov</b>	Sports Hall and Gym	<b>History</b> 1 hour 30 mins		No Exams
<b>*Friday 20 Nov</b>	AR1/2 TE4&5 TE9	<b>Art &amp; Design</b> - All Day (5 hours) <b>Hospitality and Catering</b> - All Day (5 hours) <b>Textiles</b> - All Day (5 hours)		

*\*Students who study any of these subjects will be notified separately of which day their exams are on. Students will only complete one day/exam per subject*

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## IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING PRE-PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS

This year has been disrupted as a result of school lockdown and we are aware that this has had an impact on students preparing for their summer examinations. Therefore, we have scheduled two series of examinations in November 2020 and February 2021. The purpose of these are twofold: to prepare students for their summer examination by giving them an experience of the exam hall, the examination papers they will need to sit and start the revision process. Secondly, these examinations will provide assessment data in the event that the school will need to revert to Centre Assessed Grades should students not be able to sit an examination for any reason. The following guidance regarding Centre Assessed Grades was given to schools last year which stated: **“You will need to grade your students using all the evidence available to you to determine what grade they would have most likely achieved had they sat the examination in the summer. To reach this decision you and all the teaching staff will want to consider a wide range of information where it is available. This may be through mock examinations results, non-examined assessments (NEA) and other general records or evidence of performance across the course of study. It is only through reviewing all evidence available that you will be able to form a holistic view of likely candidate performance based on professional judgement.”** (Exam Board Guidance, 2020)

Therefore, the November examination will assess pre-lock down content and provide an excellent opportunity for students to revise this knowledge and apply it to GCSE/L2 questions. The L2 examinations will also prepare some students before a formal set of examinations in January. However, the February examinations will require students to revise the full extent of their GCSE/L2 up to that point. Students in English and maths will sit the public examinations from the 2020 November series to formalise the process.

Students have been provided with their own revision guide and an outline of what they must revise for each subject. It is imperative that students’ use this guide because it complements the revision strategies that students’ learnt and practiced during the Positively Mad sessions and it explicitly tells students what to revise and where students can access revision resources.

As parent/carers you play an integral role in this preparation by supporting and encouraging good revision habits, supporting the process of revision and helping your child prepare for each set of practice examinations. Please read over your child’s revision guide so you have an awareness of what your child will need to cover in revision, help them organise their notes and file them or keep them safe for the summer examinations.

### **Ofqual**

As you may be aware, Ofqual the examination regulators, are working with the government to provide clarity about the summer examinations and the format these examinations may have, such as; changes to the GCSE content that your child will be examined in the summer or alternatively whether the full cohort of examinations will take place. We already know that Scotland have suspended examinations which makes the outcomes of pre-public examinations more important as this will inform the assessment process.

Please be aware that changes are still in discussion but at the time of writing, I can confirm the following directives from examination boards:

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<b>Examination</b>	<b>Change</b>
<b>English and Modern Foreign Languages</b>	
English Literature	Students will not be examined on An Inspector Calls
English Language	No changes
Modern Foreign Languages	Teachers will assess the Speaking component of the examination and award a pass /merit/ distinction  There will be more choice of questions in the examination
<b>Maths and Computing</b>	
Mathematics	Changes not yet known
Computer Science	Programming project can be completed outside of lessons
ICT	Reduction in the content for Units 1 and 2
Business Studies	The content in Component 1 and 2 has been streamlined
<b>Science and Technology</b>	
Science	No changes
Textiles	Component 2 has been removed from the examination which is the examined project
Hospitality and Catering	Limited changes to the coursework and practical element of the examination
Engineering Design	Changes have yet to be confirmed
<b>Humanities</b>	
Geography	Fieldwork questions have been removed from the examination paper (15 marks) The changes are minimal
History	Students will not sit the Superpowers paper
Religious Studies	No changes
<b>Performing Arts</b>	
Drama	The changes are minimal
Btec Level 2 in Art & Design	Changes are not finalised

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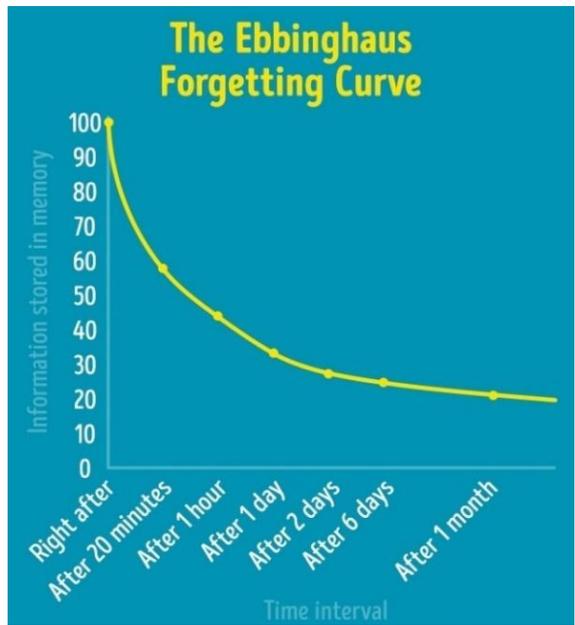
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Sport Science	Changes are not finalised
Music BTEC	Changes are not finalised

We still have no further information regarding the dates of examinations in the summer or whether all examinations will take place but as soon as we have this information we will inform you and students.

**The forgetting curve**

At GCSE students are required to learn a large amount of knowledge but the brain can forget as much as 97% of information within 30 days, unless it is constantly revisited and relearnt. Teachers will set tests throughout the course to help embed knowledge into the longer term memory but students are also required to self-test and make revision resources throughout their courses. Practice examinations are a way to support students’ experience the exam and familiarise themselves with the systems and pressures of sitting in the examination hall. It serves as a safe environment in which to make mistakes so that these are not made in summer of 2021. The process of revision also breaks up the course and provides manageable chunks of content to revise throughout their GCSE years so that by the time the summer examinations commence they are already an expert at revising and they would have revisited the materials at least four times.



**The examination process**

Studying and revising for GCSE’s is a process that starts in KS3 until the end of the Summer examinations in 2021. Students must aim to revise throughout their GCSE’s so that they continually practice GCSE skills and embed the wealth of knowledge expected for each subject. Students should be continually revising subject

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content and self-testing throughout their GCSE's so that they space out revision but also have the confidence to retrieve knowledge in the examination.

Staff will support students through the testing of knowledge throughout the courses students' study and students will be given feedback on the examination skills that they will be assessed.

The most important role as parent/carers is to be supportive. GCSE's are important and require effort and time but students also need to develop their own interests and have time for their well-being. Therefore, as parents/carers it is important to ensure there is a good balance between pressuring and motivating and not allowing students to become too complacent.

Academic achievement is important in ensuring stability for the future but your son/daughter's well-being is of great importance too and therefore the support of home and school is imperative. Do not underestimate the amount of stress your son/daughter may be feeling. If things seem to be getting too much, try to encourage them to share their thoughts and feelings and inform the school if you feel there is support that could be put in place to help.

### **Helpful hints to support your son/daughter:**

- Encourage without pressure
- Take an interest without being concerned about everyone else in the class – your child's targets are your bench mark
- Speak to teachers if you have any concerns about your child's progress and well-being
- Familiarise yourself with ShowMyHomework as it will contain revision tasks and assessment information
- Encourage students to attend revision lessons and speak to their teachers if they are stuck
- Help to plan revision using revision timetables
- Structure time on electronic devices so that your child has an academic and personal balance of time
- Test your son/daughter on the knowledge they have to learn – this is one of the most effective methods of revision
- Time them when completing exam questions and be the stopwatch
- Familiarise yourself with their revision programme so that you know the order of examinations and can help them prepare
- Check students are well equipped with equipment from black pens, to rulers and calculators
- Try to remain calm and remember they may be stressed

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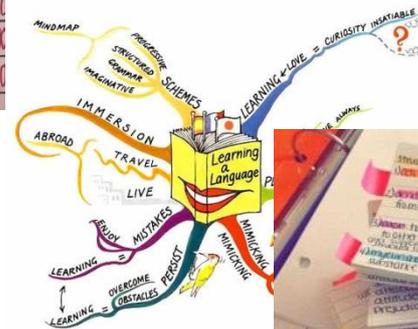
## Revision tips

1. **Revision space:** Give your child a quiet place to work without social media and other distractions
2. Know when each examination starts and ends – make **examination timetables visual**
3. Support your child creating a **revision timetable**, especially in the lead up to preparation and the summer examinations
4. Encourage **short breaks** between revising
5. **Provide brain food and encourage exercise** – even just going for walk
6. **Do not allow your child to go to bed late** before an exam: last minute revision is not proven to support good memory retention and can in fact hinder the retention of information
7. Encourage your child to use a variety of **revision techniques:**
  - Flash cards
  - Mind maps
  - Testing
  - Create posters
  - Diagrams and charts
8. **Test** your child and time them when practicing exam questions
9. Build in **rewards and treats** so that your child has something to look forward to – this could be as simple as walking the dog together, watching a film or making a nice cup of hot chocolate

**REVISION**

\* = revision of previous  
// = no revision/break

TIME	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
8:30-9:00	maths	maths	maths	maths	maths	*	*
9:00-9:30	media	chemistry	media	maths	english	maths*	//
9:30-10:00	english	chemistry	media	maths	english	maths*	//
10:00-10:30	//	//	maths	english	media	//	//
10:30-11:00	english	english	//	//	//	//	//
11:00-11:30	maths	english	//	//	chemistry	//	//
11:30-12:00	//	//	english	chemistry	//	*	biology
12:00-12:30	//	//	physics	chemistry	//	*	media
12:30-1:00	maths	biology	//	//	chemistry	english	//
1:00-1:30	//	//	//	//	chemistry	english	//
1:30-2:00	maths	biology	//	//	chemistry	english	//
2:00-2:30	//	//	//	//	chemistry	english	//
2:30-3:00	maths	biology	//	//	chemistry	english	//



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## Helping your child to manage exam stress

Students must know that it is normal to be stressed during this period of time and most importantly they must know how to manage their exam stress so that they can perform to the best of their ability.

### As parent/carers you can help students by:

- Making healthy but tasty food
- Recognising that your son/daughter may be short tempered and irritable and fight the urge to retaliate when they snap at you – it is not personal
- Let some things go such as chores or tidying their bedroom as they have a lot on their minds
- When your son/daughter is on a break, make that break count and gauge their mood as to whether they want to talk about their work or whether discussing something neutral is better



### Helpful websites:

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/school-college-and-work/school-college/exam-stress/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/coping-with-exam-stress/>

<http://www.studentminds.org.uk/examstress.html>

<https://www.familylives.org.uk/advice/teenagers/school-learning/exam-stress/>

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## **After the exam**

After each exam, give students the opportunity to talk about how they have done and allow them to do the talking while you listen. Encourage them not to dwell on mistakes they may have felt they have made. They may want some space to compare notes with other friends. You may want to share your experiences of exams as this may reassure them.

Plan an event to mark the results, whatever they are and have some fun with your child. Make it clear that you love and value your child for who they are, and not for what happened in an exam.

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