



# St Mary's CE High School

*'Everyone is equal, Everyone deserves the best'*

## **PARENT/CARER GUIDE**

### **Year 9**

### **Academic Year 2022/23**

Dear Parents/Carers

**Re: Year 9 Assessment Week: Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> – Friday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2023**

I am writing to inform you about the upcoming assessment period for students in Year 9.

The ability of students to sit formal examinations is essential. Students will be assessed at the end of Year 11 on all the work they have learnt across their two year course in a series of end of course examinations. This represents quite a challenge regarding how we, as teachers, prepare students for exams and how they prepare and revise themselves.

This set of examinations will serve a number of purposes. Firstly, it will allow us to gain an accurate understanding of how much progress your child has made over the course of Year 7-9. Secondly, it will enable students to get into the habit of preparing for formal examinations. As you are aware, students will soon be choosing their option subjects that they will study at the end of Year 9 and therefore these examinations will also provide an early indication for suitability to study subjects at GCSE level.

All exams will be sat under strict examination conditions in classrooms. Examinations will be between 45 – 50 minutes in length and will assess knowledge and skills learnt from Year 7 onwards.

The assessment timetable is attached to this letter, in order for you to support your child in their revision and preparation. Examination revision materials are available on Google Classroom.

Should you require any further information please do not hesitate contact me further.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours faithfully



S. Tilbury  
Deputy Head Teacher



Mrs E. Watts  
Deputy Head Teacher

## YEAR 9 Exam Timetable- January 2023

- **Students are not on a collapsed timetable or study leave.** The exam timetables follow the usual student timetable, if students are not in an exam they will be in normal lessons.
- All exams will be sat in classrooms under examination conditions and last approximately 45 minutes.
- Due to the complexities of the timetable, **Geography, History, RS and Languages examinations** will be added by individual teachers across the exam period, students will be informed in class when their exams are.
- There will not be examinations in Sports Science as students are completing a coursework unit that will be assessed.

### 9a Examinations

9a	Mon 9 <sup>th</sup>	Tues 10 <sup>th</sup>	Wed 11 <sup>th</sup>	Thurs 12 <sup>th</sup>	Fri 13 <sup>th</sup>
Period 1	English	Maths	Tech 'A2'		
Period 2				PA 'A1'	Business or ICT
Period 3		French or Spanish			PA 'A2'
Period 4					
Period 5	Science			Tech 'A1'	

### 9b Examinations

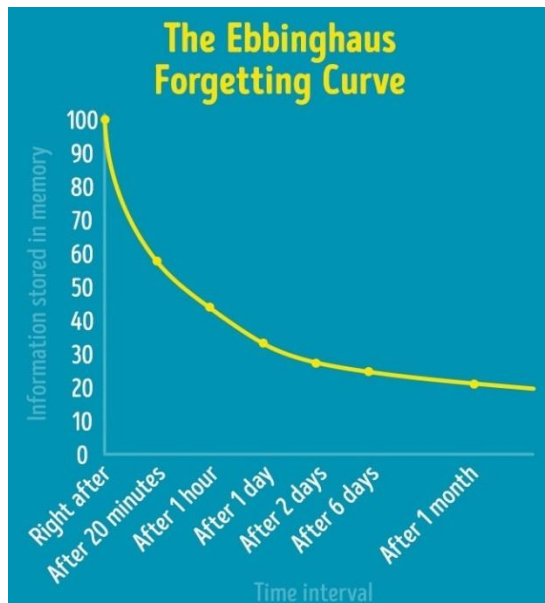
9b	Mon 9 <sup>th</sup>	Tues 10 <sup>th</sup>	Wed 11 <sup>th</sup>	Thurs 12 <sup>th</sup>	Fri 13 <sup>th</sup>
Period 1	Maths	Business or ICT		Science	Tech 'B1'
Period 2		French or Spanish			
Period 3			Tech 'B2'		
Period 4	PA 'B1'		English		PA 'B2'
Period 5					

*To understand the timetables above, students need to identify whether they are in the 'a' or the 'b' half of the year from their usual timetable.*

*Technology (Tech)/Performing Arts (PA) exams- 'A/B' refers to the subject students' study at this time on their timetable*

## 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 relearned. 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 2025. 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 2025. 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 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 Google Classroom 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

## 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

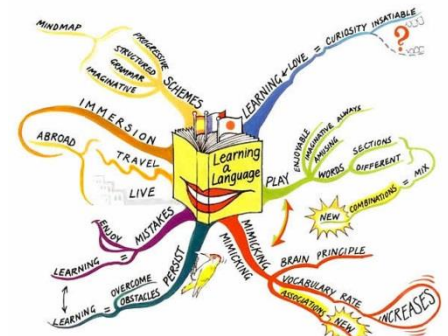
8. **Test** your child and time them when practicing exam questions

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**

\* = revise if possible  
== = no revision/break

TIME	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
8:30-9:30	school	school	school	school	school	*	*
9:30-10:30	media	chemistry	media	maths	english	maths*	==
10:30-11:30	english	chemistry	media	maths	english	maths*	==
11:30-12:30	==	==	maths	english	media	==	==
12:30-1:30	english	english	==	==	chemistry	==	==
1:30-2:30	maths	english	==	==	chemistry	==	==
2:30-3:30	==	==	english	chemistry	==	*	biology
3:30-4:30	==	==	physics	chemistry	==	*	media
4:30-5:30	maths	biology	==	==	chemistry	english	==
5:30-6:30	maths	maths	maths	biology	physics	english	==
6:30-7:30	==	==	==	==	==	==	==
7:30-8:30	biology	maths	biology	maths	phys*	==	==
8:30-9:30	media	physics	biology	media	phys*	==	==
9:30-10:30	==	==	==	==	==	==	==
10:30-11:30	==	==	==	==	==	==	==



## 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/>

## **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.