

19 April 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

Year 11 - Summer 2023 GCSE Examinations

It has been wonderful to work in partnership with you to support your child as they make progress through their courses and head towards final GCSE examinations. We know this can be a challenging year and we are extremely pleased with how well our year 11 students have risen to it. We were particularly impressed with how they tackled their most recent trial exams; their attitude, attendance, uniform and behaviour were excellent.

As we start this third and final term of the school year and turn our full attention to the examination period, I am writing to update you on our plans for Year 11 students. Our focus is always to support each student to achieve the best possible outcomes this summer and secure their desired post-16 pathway.

Examination period:

Exams officially begin on 15 May and finish on 28 June with Thursday 29 June as a contingency day. The exam contingency day is for national or local disruption to examinations in the UK. All students must remain available until this day in case an awarding body needs to invoke its contingency plan. Please see the [Exam section](#) of our website for the summer exam timetable as well as other useful information.

Exam preparation:

Our experience is that it is best for students to remain in school for as long as possible during their exams, with taught revision sessions from their teachers. We have carefully designed a specific timetable of subject revision, which sits alongside 'real' exams, to ensure students are in a structured environment with their teachers for as long as possible.

This year, most of the exams are spread out across 4 weeks – 2 weeks before and 2 weeks after the May half term holiday. During this period all Year 11 students are required to attend school as normal for exams and revision lessons. Attendance will be monitored as normal.

After the Physics exam on the morning of Friday 16 June, most students will have completed the majority of their exams, so will be allocated study leave from this point. They will only be required to attend school for any remaining exams. Due to the remaining exams for some

students, this will **not** be a celebration afternoon. Students will have the opportunity to attend a final celebration assembly, have pictures taken and sign shirts on Thursday 29 June.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that all students should be in full uniform for the remainder of Year 11; this is a requirement for all examinations.

Vocational courses:

Students studying vocational courses (such as BTECs) may be asked to attend school after Friday 16 June to complete work. Teachers will let individual students and their parents/carers know where this is the case.

Attendance:

Year 11 students' attendance is absolutely crucial from this point forward. In every single lesson, teachers will be revising content from earlier in the course, and teaching students how to understand what is being asked of them on exam papers. Every year we see that missing days of school at this stage means our students do not feel prepared for their GCSE exams, and this increases exam anxiety.

Revision:

We have delivered an intensive programme of revision support through our tutorial programme to all of year 11 this year. We have dedicated sessions to teaching students the most effective revision techniques, as suggested by scientific research. We have encouraged students away from less impactful passive strategies such as re-reading, making notes and highlighting. Instead we have introduced them to:

- how to 'chunk' revision, working in 25-minute blocks, with a 5-minute break in between (Pomodoro Method)
- the correct way to make and use flashcards (with the Leitner Method)
- how to create and use their own quizzes from notes / reading
- the importance of undertaking practice papers in timed conditions, which they should then bring into school for us to check their marking
- the value in reading mark schemes, examiner reports, and exemplar answers.

These are active strategies which are proven to have a positive impact on outcomes.

There are also range of subject specific revision sessions available for your child to attend. These take place at lunch time and after school and are open to all students. We have also introduced the Monkseaton Revision Relay competition to encourage students to attend these revision sessions offered by their teachers.

GCSE Results Day:

The GCSE Results Day is on **Thursday 24 August 2023**. Students will be able to collect their results from school in the morning. We will let you know details closer to the time. Teaching staff and Connexions advisors will be on hand to offer advice and guidance to all students.

You can make arrangements for a named person to collect the results on a student's behalf but these arrangements must be made in writing in advance. A letter needs be sent to the exams office, which details the name of the student and the person who will be collecting them. This

information can also be sent via email to exams@monkseaton.org.uk Please note we are not able to issue results over the telephone or via email.

Finally, I want to again congratulate all Year 11 students on their continued hard work and effort. We are looking forward to celebrating their success in August upon collection of their results.

Please do not hesitate to contact school if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Suddes', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jo Suddes