

24th November 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

I am writing to you again about the two week mock examination period due to commence on Monday 30th November, 2020. As I stated in the letter sent out to parents dated 3rd November, we intend to hold mock examinations, as in previous years, so that Year 11 pupils become familiar with the formalities and processes of public examinations as well as gain a measure of how they are progressing in their GCSE subjects.

As we know, the Government has stated that public examinations for GCSE qualifications will be held at the end of May 2021 until the beginning of July 2021. We are also very aware that the 'run up' to the Year 11 mock examinations this year has been during a unique set of circumstances. I hope that the Year 11 pupils can use this week of required self-isolation to revise effectively for the mock examinations and that this mini 'circuit break' will enable as many Year 11 to return as possible for the mocks, commencing with Maths Paper 1 on Monday 30th November.

We realise that mock examinations can be worrying at the best of times, even more so when pupils may feel anxious about not being in lessons. There are a number of ways that teachers will aim to help in preparation for the mocks. Work will continue to be posted on Google Classrooms which pupils can use as a means to ask questions and submit work. Teachers are also planning live lessons this week, where appropriate, so that Year 11 can feel more confident in their preparation. There are other, online, resources that pupils can use and I have signalled these on the school website, under the 'Learning' tab, entitled 'Remote Learning':

https://springfield.uk.net/images/files/documents/Remote_Learning_-_October_2020.pdf

I know that Mr Ridley, Head of Achievement for Year 11, will record for pupils an online 'assembly' on the subject of the mocks during this week but I wanted to re-iterate, and add to, the protocols I mentioned in my earlier letter so that pupils know what to expect when they arrive on Monday 30th November.

By now you should have received, from Mrs Millar (Examinations Officer), a seating plan for your son/daughter as well as a list of exams to be taken during the two weeks. Please be aware that the list of exams will be shorter than the final list for May – July as the final time period is four weeks' duration, not two. We have tried to cover as many subjects as possible but two weeks is a truncated version.

- Pupils should arrive at the tennis courts 10 minutes before each exam
- They should line up, taking care to allow a safe distance from each other, according to their seating plan allocation. (There are letters on the Sports Hall wall (A – K) so if a pupil is seated in D 7, they should line up in front of the letter D, 7 spaces back, a safe distance behind the person in front)
- If they are in the Gym for an exam, there are letters on the fence of the right hand tennis court to line up in front of in the same way



- They should wear a face mask until they enter the Sports Hall/Gym where they must take off the mask. Exam rules stipulate that face masks cannot be worn in an exam situation
- We will open the back and front doors to the Sports Hall and Gym during the exams, according to Government guidelines on air circulation, so pupils can dress accordingly in order to feel comfortable. (For example, they can wear a T shirt under their school shirt and jumper if required). They should still have their uniforms on but coats will need to be taken off
- Pupils need to bring their own equipment – pens, pencils, rulers, calculators – in a transparent plastic case. Parents will understand that equipment cannot be shared or handed out by invigilating staff in the current climate
- If a pupil brings in a bottle of water, the label must be removed before entering the Sports Hall/Gym
- Mobile phones are not to be taken into the Sports Hall/Gym

If, for any reason, a pupil is not present for one of the mock exams, Mrs Millar will send the paper home electronically to the pupil's school email address and we would ask that parents ensure that their son/daughter completes the exam in as close to exam conditions as possible and send the exam paper back to Mrs Millar for distribution. This can be done electronically or by post.

It is important to note that, were the Government to decide that GCSE exams in June and July of 2021 were no longer viable, and that schools would again have to decide on Centre Assessed Grades for Year 11 pupils, the results of the mock examinations would provide one set of data only. If this were the case, pupils would not be judged solely on the mock results, but on work completed over the course of the year.

There has been a lot of coverage in the national media about the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on some pupils' wellbeing and mental health. We, like many schools, have seen some of the effects of the pandemic in regards to heightened levels of anxiety. There are a number of support resources that are available for pupils and I include three websites that may be useful:

- <https://youngminds.org.uk/>
- relate@relateportsmouth.org.uk (U Matter Counselling Support 11-18 year olds. Contact: 02392 827026)
- <https://www.southernhealth.nhs.uk/covid-19-looking-after-you/coronavirus-children-and-young-people/>

I hope that this helps assuage any fears or anxieties that your son/daughter has and helps in preparing for the mocks. We look forward to seeing Year 11 back again next week.

Many regards

Mr B Wharton
Deputy Headteacher