Chenderit School
A VISUAL ARTS COLLEGE
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Dear Parents and Carers

In a few weeks' time, students in year 9 will be sitting their end-of-year exams, and as part of their preparation, they have been doing a unit of work during tutor time on exam preparation and revision. During some of the discussions in each tutor group it became clear to us that we could help parents support their child much more usefully if we sent home some key information and advice. Therefore, we have asked subject teachers for information about what exactly students will be tested on, and when the assessments will take place.

We have also compiled some advice that may be of help when discussing the tests: the comments and suggestions are offered to help you respond to any questions or concerns your child may have. We want everyone to make the best of the opportunities their schooling offers, and that includes learning to show themselves at their best in exam conditions.

We need to remind students that they have already had practice in key stage 2, and many displayed fabulous skills and attitudes when they did so.

In many ways, a good comparison to use with your child is that of athletes preparing for the Olympics, up to four years away. Athletes do not hope to succeed on the basis of last-minute cramming; they do not face their Olympic trials as "a chance to find out what I don't know" and the start of their journey. They realise that success starts early, with good habits and skills built up and consolidated over many hours of practice.

In subject lessons, teachers will give more subject-specific guidance, and in tutor time there are opportunities to discuss revision skills and how to manage time. Students will be given a copy of the table showing what the exams will cover in each subject.

We hope you find these comments of use, and welcome any questions or comments you might have to help amend our guidance for future reference.

Yours sincerely

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Preparing for end-of-year exams in years: a guide for parents

Schools have set end-of-year exams in different forms for many years, but with the changes to GCSE exam specifications they now have a much greater significance. Formal exams are now the largest part of GCSE assessment, including in subjects we might think of as generally practical, such as PE.

In the sections below I have set out answers to a number of questions you, or your children may have about the exams: I hope they will help you support them to make the most of the opportunity the tests present.

Why have end-of-year tests?

Experience tells us that it is not just knowledge of a particular subject that leads to GCSE exam success. Many other things have an impact: revision, time management, being able to read and respond to an exam paper, generally "exam technique". It makes sense that if we want to get good at something, a sport, a performance, even a driving test, we practise in advance.

There are other reasons too: there is a great deal of recent research that shows regular testing helps us remember more. The effort that goes in to retrieving knowledge helps cement or reinforce that knowledge, making it easier to apply it in unfamiliar circumstances.

What should students revise?

I have asked subject staff to give a brief overview of what has been covered. Students should use their exercise books and other resources (for example websites) to refresh their memory.

How should students revise?

Sadly, right up to year 11 and beyond, a few students will still say, "I don't know how to revise." This is a shame, because teachers, parents and other sources such as BBC Bitesize or SAM learning will offer good advice. Often this is advice of a general nature: plan your revision; use "chunking" and work in time slots of around 40 minutes, with a break before the next; take exercise; sleep well.

What should students actually do when they revise?

Ideally, revision starts on day one of any course, and for many students it does. Keeping good notes, catching up on anything missed, checking understanding and re-reading are all things the most successful students begin early on.

As exams approach students should check and organise their notes: do they have everything they need? Students should check with the guidance they have received from the teacher: what will this test cover?

Then, systematically students should set about reviewing or revising

Is re-reading enough?

Re-reading is important. If you are studying a literature text, for example, it is vital.

For all other subjects, the best advice we can give is to make our revision active. The simplest method is one students will be familiar with: look, cover, write, check. This is the way many of us learn new spellings.

The same principle works equally in other subjects. I first remember reading this advice in the back of an old chemistry textbook: it is stunningly simple, but very effective. Take a topic you need to know about: write down the keyword on a blank piece of paper; write down everything you need to know about it. Then check with a good source – your notes, a textbook or reliable website.

This principle works very well when you need to grasp a big idea. You can add detail, in the form of a mind-map.

If you need to learn details in a specific sequence, you many need a mnemonic: most of us remember the colours of the rainbow or planets in the solar system in this way.

Often we need to understand a process: here a diagram helps – and we should look, cover, draw and check.

If we need to learn a list of dates a timeline can be helpful, and understanding of how and why one things led to another can help when there is a clear sequence. Otherwise, we need to learn: look, cover, write, check.

Many students find reading and reciting aloud key ideas, phrases or definitions helps.

Self-testing is they key: we can learn to recall many things by writing a single point on flashcard, with a term on one side and a definition or example on the other. We can look at one side, and recall what is on the other.

How else can students practise?

In something like maths, practice papers, trying to apply knowledge in new situations is vital.

In other subjects, practising answering exam-style questions is of tremendous importance.

There are two important examination skills that develop with practice: reading the questions and applying knowledge in unfamiliar situations.

Most examinations test knowledge, skills and understanding.

In order to achieve, students need to know things – information, names, facts, dates, place, quotations. These need to be learned, as described here. They can be tested through recall activities.

Students also need to have acquired skills of reading, analysing, assessing, of carrying out calculations. These need to be practised, by carrying out longer answer problems.

Reading exam questions carefully, underlining keywords and asking yourself, “What do I know that is relevant here?” is a vital exam skill. This can be practised by looking at past papers or examples. Parents can help, when students are stuck, by asking questions like, “What have you done in the past that can help you with this?”

Understanding why things are important, how they link to other things we know is vital in making the most of our knowledge. If we understand how or why a scientific process happens, we are more likely to remember details of it, and be able to apply what we know appropriately.

Students can practise this skill by asking themselves big questions that involve assessing, evaluating or justifying. Questions such as, “What is the most important or significant reason or cause…?” draw on understanding.

Students should increasingly look for the prompts in questions that alert them: is this a *how* question or a *what* question?

Sometimes the best way to revise understanding is to create a mind-map, which allows students to see connections between different ideas.

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Is working with someone else effective?

It can be, for some people, as long as they are motivated to work; for some, the relaxed setting of working with a friend is a distraction.

Once again, the key is to make the revision active – setting questions, problems and challenges and checking their responses.

How should we deal with examination stress?

One of the reasons for having trial exams is to get used to working to time, so that the real exams are less unfamiliar.

As with anything, some students are far too relaxed, unwilling to commit the energy and effort needed to secure a good result. Others, often ambitious and hard-working students, feel under stress.

We all need to learn how to work with our stress; some psychologists recommend distraction, or positive self-talk. Last year a BBC documentary screened at exam time showed how you can manage the adrenalin that is a consequence of stress by telling ourselves that we are not afraid, but rather excited. Apparently, the physical feelings are the same: we can trick our bodies into thinking we are actually enjoying the experience. This has the effect of calming negative feelings.

And, of course, the familiar messages hold true: as long as we do our best, no one will complain.

But my son or daughter has said they have tried and cannot learn, or remember anything – what do I say to them?

Like anything, some of us find learning easier than others, but motivation has a massive effect. A number of students who find school subjects hard will learn to drive (both theory and practice) with no problem, because they are motivated to do so. I remember seeing a year 11 student, who apparently struggled to recall factual knowledge in his school subjects, displaying an encyclopaedic knowledge of the football grounds and managers of all the football league clubs. Had he been motivated to do so, he could equally have learnt names and details of all the elements in the Periodic Table!

As a parent, how can I help?

Support and encouragement is a key role, offering to explain, if we can, where there are difficulties; offering to test, using the flashcards the student has made; testing vocabulary; praising hard work and concentration.

K P Taylor May 2018

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Subject	Exam date and time A side	Exam date and time B side	What will the exam consist of?	What should students revise?
Business Studies	Friday 21st June		One hour writing	"Business basics" terminology; ethical business; recruitment; business finance
Computing	Tuesday 19th June		One hour	• Know basic tags for HTML and Javascript • Computational thinking • How to design suitable algorithms to represent the solution to a problem - flow charts • Python programming • How to identify suitable variables and structures with appropriate validation for their system • Data types - Boolean, string, integer • How to use functions/sub programmes to produce structured reusable code • How to select suitable techniques for the development of the solution • arrays, lists, csv files and txt files, loops Using the internet find out about the following: • Write down or type up on a word document • What is the role of the CPU? • What is the role of the clock in the CPU? • What does the bus do? e.g. Address bus, data bus, control bus? • Select four examples of a CPU – at least one from INTEL and the other AMD? • Find the difference between a dual core and quad core CPU? How many instructions per second can they process data? • Input, process and output devices • Internal components of a computer system including motherboard, CPU, graphics cards, network card, sound cards, RAM • Difference between RAM and ROM

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			• System security - including encryption, Operating System security, malware, viruses, worms and Trojans.
Design and Technology	Tuesday 19th June period 2	One hour exam – answer all questions	Design a flat-pack collection box to be used for a charity – including design criteria, flat pack design, evaluation of a flat pack collection box, packaging symbols and commercial card cutting. Manufacturing systems and organising production, barcoding, waste materials and using CAD and CAM to reduce waste. Drilling machines – describing precautions and hazards during use. Material identification and its use for producing different products. Modelling using CAD and CAM. Fastenings and adhesives – names and function. Glues and their uses – including advantages and disadvantages. Manufactured boards - names and uses. Card engineering – gift card design and developments, flow chart to produce a gift card.
Drama	Monday 18th June period 4	A series of questions based on 'Blood Brothers' (30 minutes)	Students are advised to use the GCSE Drama revision booklet provided to focus on the different possible areas and questions. They may wish to re-cap and read *Blood Brothers* by Willy Russell. How to write as an ACTOR, DIRECTOR and DESIGNER for *Blood Brothers*.
Drama	Tuesday 19th June period 2	A Live Performance question on 'Treasure Island' (National Theatre	Students are advised to re-cap and go through their *Treasure Island* essay responses and dialogic feedback in preparation for their PPE, re-capping significant and key

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			production seen 30 minutes)	moments of the production, production values and the impact they had on the audience
English	Tuesday 19th June period 3	Tuesday 19th June period5	One hour reading	How to analyse an unseen extract; revise terminology
English	Wednesday 20th June period 1	Wednesday 20th June period 4	One hour writing	How to write descriptively using variety and avoiding clichés
Food Preparation and Nutrition	Tuesday 19th June period 2		One hour exam – answer all questions	The relationship between diet and health • The importance of a healthy diet • How to use the major commodity groups to make a balanced food choice • The government's guidelines for a healthy diet and the inclusion of new regulations as they are issued • The application of the eight tips for healthy eating • Major diet-related health issues • Diet-related diseases and conditions: obesity (weight loss and gain), cardiovascular, coronary heart disease (CHD), diabetes, diverticulitis, bone health (osteoporosis), dental health, anaemia and high blood pressure Food Science • Making food safe to eat • Making food more digestible/palatable • Conduction, convection and radiation • Enrichment/loss, increase/reduce calorific value, vitamin losses • Texture, flavour, appearance, aroma Sensory properties • Changes that happen when food is cooked: texture, appearance, colour taste, sound and aroma • The importance of the senses of sight, taste, touch, smell and hearing and how they work when making food choices

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				• The five basic tastes recognised by receptors (sweetness, sourness, bitterness, saltiness and umami) • How to set up a testing panel • Styles and forms of rating, ranking and profiling systems with the use of appropriate descriptive terminology Food safety • The role of time, temperature, moisture and food availability • Natural decay, enzyme action and yeast production • Types of micro-organisms and uses • Labelling and date marks • Visual checks • Reputable supplier • Types of storage and how to store foods correctly • Preventing cross contamination and food poisoning: direct and indirect methods • High-risk foods, critical temperatures
Geography	Tuesday 19th June period 2	Monday 18th June period 1	One hour exam consisting of multiple choice questions, data response and extended answers	• Development (definitions, indicators, top down and bottom up strategies, case studies) • Map skills (4 and 6 figure grid references, direction, scale, measuring distances on a map) • Weathering and glaciation (recognising processes and landforms) and knowing the challenges and opportunities of glacial and relict glacial environments
History	Tuesday 19th June – 9K1 and 2 period 1 9H1 and 2 period 4		One GCSE style paper (60 minutes), three questions: similarity/difference; explain why; judgement (how far do you agree)	• Crime and Punishment from 1000AD to present day: • Medieval (1000-1500), Early Modern (1500-1700), Industrial (1700-1900) and Twentieth Century (1900-2000)

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Maths	Monday 18th June period 2	Monday 18th June period 3	One hour Exam. Non-Calculator	Top set to do higher maths. Topics include: product of prime factors, multiplying decimals, scatter graphs, equations of lines, means, standard form, reverse percentage, curves, indices, ratio and proportion, volume, midpoints of lines. Sets 2 and 3 to do foundation. Topics include: powers, decimal places and significant figures, fractions to percentages, percentages, solve equations, proportion, probability, fractions, foreign currency, nth term, converting units, area, pie charts, substitution, products of prime factors, scatter graphs and multiplying decimals.
Maths	Wednesday 20th June period 4	Wednesday 20th June period 3	One hour exam. Calculator required	Top set to do higher maths. Topics include: plans and elevations, ratio, compound interest, solving equations, decimals, fractions and percentages, averages, drawing lines and inequalities on graphs Sets 2 and 3 to do foundation. Topics include: pictographs, simplifying expressions, fractions, angles, types of number, calculator skills, conversion graphs, coordinates, factorising, plans and elevations and compound interest
Media	Tuesday 19th June period 1 and Wednesday 20th June period 5		90 minutes	Component one – James Bond, Section A: media language, representation and media industries
Modern Foreign Languages	Monday 18th – Friday 22nd June		30-40 minutes of listening and reading and 30-50 minutes of writing	French • Family and friends, what to do in your local area, relationships in the family, reflexive verbs in the present tense, arranging to go out, describing an event in the present and past, discussing role models • Cinema, music, free time and opinions, TV programmes, technology and how you use it, food and meal times, fashion and clothing with opinions, describing the daily routine and daily life with time, celebrations Spanish

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				• Discussing holidays in the present, past and future tenses, • holiday preferences and activities on a holiday, discussing trips abroad, problems on a holiday, describing school subjects and opinions, describing a school, problems in a school, uniform and opinions, school tips, family and relationships with opinions and reasons, how you get on with other.
Music	Tuesday 19th June period 4 & Thursday 21st June period 3			The first session will be 40 minutes and will consist of listening questions based on the four set works studied so far. The second session will be unfamiliar listening and will last 40 minutes
PE GCSE	Tuesday 19th June period 1		One hour written exam – short answer and multiple choice questions	• Impact of diet; on both health and performance (macro and micro-nutrients) • Consequences of a sedentary lifestyle • Muscular-skeletal system; how it enables movement and sport performance • Cardio-respiratory system; how it enables gas exchange and transport of nutrients around the body • Components of fitness; selecting most important for activity • Training methods; how appropriate they are to activity • Thresholds of training; aerobic and anaerobic
Religious Studies	Thursday 21st June period 5	Thursday 21st June period 4	One GCSE style exam paper based on both the Christianity and Islam units of the course	Christian attitudes towards marriage and family life (Religion and Ethics unit 2) Muslim attitudes towards peace and conflict (Religion, Peace and Conflict unit 4)
Science - Chemistry	Tuesday 19th June period 5	Tuesday 19th June period 3	One-hour exam – short structured questions and some longer questions	Impurities and boiling points Elements compounds and mixtures States of matter Solubility

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			requiring more detailed responses.	Chromatography Distillation Melting and boiling Atomic structure Mass and atomic numbers
Science - Biology	Thursday 21st June – period 2	Thursday 21st June – period 1	One-hour exam – Short structured questions and some longer questions requiring more detailed responses.	Cell division and growth Mitosis Mitochondria Cells Magnification Enzymes and digestion Neurons Semi permeable membranes
Science – Physics	Friday 22nd June – period 2	Friday 22nd June – period 3	One-hour exam – Short structured questions and some longer questions requiring more detailed responses.	Stopping distances Falling objects Speed Scalars and vectors Mass and eight Resultant forces Newton's 1st law Velocity time graphs- areas and gradients Force mass and acceleration Rate of change of momentum- Newton's 2nd law Momentum Air bags and safety