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Dear Parents and Carers of Year 11

I have been so impressed with the level of effort and work from the Year 11 students. I want to thank you for your ongoing effort to support your children in making such a positive start to their final GCSE year.

As you are aware, there are a significant number of teachers who will be participating in the strike organised by the National Education Union (NEU) on Wednesday 1 February and therefore, students in Year 11 have been directed to work from home on this day. Teachers not participating in the strike will set lessons for this day for students to complete at home, which will be available on ePraise. In addition to completing these lessons, I would like to encourage students to use this time to revise for their up and coming GCSE Mock exams, which are taking place from Monday 6 February to Friday 17 February. Therefore, please find information in relation to revision below, so that you can support your child during the day of Wednesday 1 February, as well as running up to the mock exams.

Revision Workshop

All students have participated in a revision workshop, where they were shown revision techniques and how to create a successful revision schedule. For those parents and carers who were unable to attend Year 11 Information Evening, I have summarised our advice below.

How to create a revision schedule?

There have been neuroscience studies which prove that writing down plans and goals makes us more likely to achieve them. This applies to exams and revision, too. Therefore, creating a revision schedule in physical form should be completed by all students. Please find the steps students should take when creating their schedule below.

Step 1: Students should work out how much time they realistically have to revise.

Step 2: Students should decide which GCSE subjects they need to spend more or less time on.

Step 3: Students should prioritise revision according to GCSE exam dates.

Step 4: Students should build in breaks and downtime within their revision schedule.

Step 5: Students should plan to complete the revision challenge that they are least looking forward to first.

Step 6: Students should ensure that their revision schedule is flexible.

Step 7: Students should spend no longer than two hours revising at a time. They should then have at least a 30 minute break afterwards, before they continue.

How to revise?

Students should experiment with the following revision techniques, and decide which technique is best for them.

Cornell Notes

- Students should divide their page into four sections. One block at the top of the page, two columns in the centre and a block at the bottom of the page.
- In the top block, students should write the title of their topic.
- In the right-hand column, students should write their main notes about the topic. They should use a resource to aid them with this.
- In the left-hand column, students should create questions, which link to their main notes.
- In the bottom block, students should write a brief summary of the content on the page.
- Students should cover the right-hand column and answer the questions on the left, and revisit these questions over a period of time.

Memory Palaces and Journeys

The memory palace technique is about changing your memories into images placed in a familiar mental location. The idea is that you can mentally walk through your palace looking at your memories to recall them.

- For your first memory palace, try choosing a place that you know well, like your home or school.
- Plan out the whole route — for example: front door, shoe rack, bathroom, kitchen, living room, etc. Some people find that going clockwise is helpful, but it is not essential. Eventually, you will have many memory palaces. You will also be able to revise the memory palace after you test it a few times, so do not worry if it is not perfect on the first try.
- Now take a list of something that you want to memorize.
- Take one or two items at a time and place a mental image of them in each location of your memory palace. Try to exaggerate the images of the items and have them interact with the location. For example, if the first item is “carrots” and the first location in your memory palace is the front door, picture some giant carrots opening up your front door.
- Make the memory images come alive with your senses. Exaggeration of the images and humour can help.

Revision Cards

- Students should write a word/question on one side
- On the other side students should write the definition/answer
- Students should test themselves before they turn the card over
- They should put the ‘don’t knows’ into a separate pile
- Students should go back to the ‘don’t know’ pile
- They should then re-test their self twice
- If they still don’t know the answers/definitions then they should go back to their books and read again
- Students should then re-test themselves 1 or 2 days later

Here are some other revision techniques:

Mnemonics

Posters

Colourful Lists

Mindmaps

Help and support with revision technique

The school has purchased a copy of ‘How to revise?’ by CGP for every Year 11 student. These will be distributed early next week. In their copy, they will find a range of effective study tips and techniques for specific subjects, information regarding exams and advice as to how to look after themselves during the exam period.

What to revise?

Faculty leaders have created revision resources for all students, which can be found on our website.

<https://www.jmhs.hereford.sch.uk/students/revision-resources/>. The revision resource sheets advise students the areas that they need to revise, and therefore, we would encourage students to read these for all of their subjects. In addition, students can refer to their classroom workbooks as well as their most recent feedback for their assessments to inform their revision.

Online Revision Platforms

Students can access the following online revision platforms to obtain resources for their revision. These platforms are free to use, and provide a range of videos, revision pages and diagrams for nearly all GCSE subjects, which are all extremely useful for students who need assistance with certain topics.

GCSE Pod - <https://www.gcsepod.com>

SENECA - <https://senecalarning.com/en-GB>

BBC Bitesize - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize>

Oak National Academy - <https://www.thenational.academy>

How can you support your child?

Creating the best conditions:

- A quiet place to work with good lighting
- A table which gives enough room for books and other materials
- Resources (pens, pencils, colours, highlighters, paper, notes, books) close at hand
- A comfortable chair – but not too comfortable!
- Encourage the removal of things that present distractions
- Offer to test and ask random questions

We understand that Year 11 can be as challenging for family life as it is for the pupils themselves and it is our sincere aim to support you and your child in any way we can through this demanding but also exciting time. Please do not hesitate to get in contact if you have any queries or concerns.

Best wishes

Hayley Newnes

The Head of Year 11 and Enrichment Coordinator