

Oaklands Catholic School and Sixth Form College

Stakes Hill Road
Waterlooville
Hampshire
PO7 7BW

☎ 023 9225 9214

☎ 023 9223 0317

🌐 www.oaklandscatholicschool.org

✉ oaklands@oaklandscatholicschool.org



Headteacher: Matthew Quinn B.Ed (Hons), M.A., NPQH

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26th April 2024

Dear Parents/Carers

Year 11 GCSE Examination Season

For Year 11 there is now a real sense that GCSE season has started. Some students have had their Food Preparation and Nutrition Exam and MFL Speaking Tests are underway. Today Geography and History students have had their preparation day.

Attendance during this final period of lessons is critical. All students are expected to contribute positively to the learning environment in the classroom. In addition to homework, all students should be following a revision timetable and attending revision classes provided whenever possible. The revision schedule was issued to students earlier in the year, it can be found by following [this link](#).

I cannot reiterate strongly enough the importance of thorough preparation for these examinations, and I ask that you continue to give all the encouragement you can as intensive revision has a direct bearing on examination outcome. Students must ensure they achieve the maximum number of GCSE qualifications which means a concerted effort across all subjects. Good qualifications in Maths and English will be critical for the vast majority of opportunities available post-16.

The main period of examinations starts on **Thursday 9th May**, and with a busy exam schedule starting straight away students will remain in school for the next two weeks until the Whitsun half term holiday. Up to half term, students will spend time in lessons preparing for exams, either at the direction of their teachers or undertaking self-directed revision. **Over these two weeks, if an afternoon exam finishes before the end of the school day students will be permitted to leave to go home.**

The final day for Year 11 students will be **Friday 24th May**. Students will celebrate their Leavers' Mass in the Hall, followed by our traditional celebration on the sunken lawn. **It is expected that students will leave site by 1.30pm.**

A number of departments may provide drop-in sessions immediately before a morning exam and there may be a few alterations to the timetable in the lead up to half term. These final revision sessions are extremely useful and provide pre-exam support. Information regarding these sessions will be posted on your child's Teams account.

Organisation of Exams

The examination boards stipulate that students should **not** bring their mobile phones, smart watches or other electronic devices into the examination room. Therefore, we will be operating a system where students will leave their bags, coats and any devices in one room near to the Hall, which will be locked for the duration of each exam.

Students are expected to arrive for exams in full Oaklands uniform. They are **not** allowed to wear coats / hoodies in the exam, so please ensure they wear base layers if necessary to stay warm. Any coats, jackets or hoodies **must** be left outside the exam hall, along with bags and electronic devices.

It is essential that your child is prompt for the start of each exam in order to facilitate this administration task and ensure a prompt start to the exam; **this means that students should arrive by 8.45am for morning exams and 1.00pm for afternoon exams.**

Coursework and Continual Assessment

By now most subjects will have completed any non-exam assessed (NEA) components. Mr Bamford has published on your child's teams account the final details related to NEA components. Your child is advised to read these carefully.

Exam Contingency Sessions

Thursday 6th, Thursday 13th and Wednesday 26th June

I wrote to you all on 9th February detailing the arrangements for the Examination Contingency Sessions. The awarding bodies have designated **Wednesday 26th June 2024** as the 'contingency day' for examinations. **The afternoons of Thursday 6th June and Thursday 13th June** have been designated as 'contingency afternoons' for examinations.

This means that all exam candidates must be available to sit exams from the start of the exam season in May until Wednesday 26th June 2024, including the two afternoons of 6th and 13th June.

Timetable and Equipment

Your child has already been given their own personalised examination timetable. I would be grateful if you could display your child's timetable somewhere prominent at home. Many parents also take a screen shot of this. Going through the timetable with your child at the start of each week will help prevent any mishaps. Replacement exam timetables can be provided by Mrs Colley, the Examinations Officer, whose office can be found on the first floor of the White House.

It is also essential that students are aware of what equipment they need to bring into school in order to sit their exams. As well as making sure that they have at least two working pens (black ink required for public exams), students must be prepared for exams which require a calculator, mathematical measuring equipment such as a ruler and protractor, and additional stationery for subjects such as Media Studies or the Design and Technology disciplines which may require coloured sketching in the exam.

A list of items needed for each subject will be on our website via [this link](#).

Please note that the school only has a limited supply of spare stationery and equipment so is unable to guarantee that there will be sufficient stock to provide to students who are not fully prepared for their exams.

Year 11 Prom

As you are aware, the school organises a Prom for students at the end of Year 11. This year the Prom will take place on **Thursday 4th July**. Attendance at this will only be guaranteed if students continue to meet our expectations for engagement, punctuality, attendance and behaviour during the remaining few weeks of school and over the examination period.

Outstanding Debts

All outstanding debts with the school, as can be seen on Scopay, must be paid before the end of **Friday 21st June**. Prom tickets will not be issued where there are outstanding debts. If you have any issues with outstanding debts, please contact the Finance Office as soon as possible. Please can I also ask that any library books and subject textbooks on loan are returned by this date, or we will have to charge you for these.

Finally, I would like to wish all students the best of luck for the forthcoming examinations.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Quinn', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Mr Matthew Quinn
Headteacher