

Oaklands Catholic School and Sixth Form College

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Dear Parents and Carers

Year 11 GCSE Examination Season

Firstly, I would like to congratulate Year 11 on their attitude towards their studies over the last few months, there is a positive feeling that Year 11 are now well placed to succeed in their summer examinations. May I also thank you as parents and carers for your ongoing support over the last five years in terms of supporting your child's education with us. For students there is now a real sense that GCSE season has started. Some students have already completed practical examinations, such as Art and Photography.

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 here [Year 11 Revision/Exams - Oaklands Catholic School and Sixth Form College](#).

The exam period is extremely busy, and will no doubt bring some stress, worry and anxiety however it is important to remember that stress is not always a bad thing and can in fact be a positive motivator and give students the 'get up and go' that they need to succeed. What is important though is that students learn to manage stress and have good healthy exam habits over the exam period to ensure they can achieve the best they can.

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 **Monday 11th May**, although Drama and Child Development students will have sat exams the week before. With a busy exam schedule starting straight away students will remain in school 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.** If you want your child to remain in school over this time, please can you contact the Head of Year to confirm this.

The final timetabled day for Year 11 students will be **Friday 22nd 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 approximately 12.30pm.

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.

Can I remind all students that these exams are public examinations and cannot be rescheduled or sat on a different day; students must attend any exams on the allocated day without fail. Attendance is compulsory for all students during the exam period.

Organisation of Exams

The examination boards stipulate that students **must not** bring their mobile phones, 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. The students have had experience of this procedure during the mock exams.

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**. It is also important that your child has made sufficient time to visit the toilet before the exam starts as **toilet breaks are not permitted**.

JCQ have tightened the regulations and they state that any candidate who communicates with another candidate once they are in the exam room **must** be reported to the awarding body. Moreover, any candidate who opens their exam paper before they are told to **must** be reported to the awarding body. **For the avoidance of doubt students must not talk or communicate in any way whilst in the exam room – both before, during and after the exam.**

Coursework and Continual Assessment

By now most subjects will have completed any non-exam assessed (NEA) components. Mr Gorman 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 Day Wednesday 24th June (all day)

I wrote to you all on 13th February detailing the arrangements for the Examination Contingency Day. The awarding bodies have designated **Wednesday 24th June 2026** as the 'contingency day' 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 24th June 2026.

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. Please ensure that when your child has a morning exam, they arrive in school in plenty of time to ensure that they are as relaxed as possible.

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 by following [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 2nd 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 19th 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 say how proud we are of each and every one of our Year 11 students. They have worked incredibly throughout KS4. They deserve every success in their forthcoming GCSE exams and we wish them all the very best.

Yours sincerely



Mrs A Bonnington
Head of School