



BYRCHALL HIGH SCHOOL

LIVE TO LEARN LEARN TO LIVE

May 2022

Dear Parent/Carer,

Preparing Year 11 for their GCSE Exams

We are always reviewing the methods we use to support Year 11 pupils as they enter this crucial phase of preparation for the final GCSE exams and many parents often ask about ways they can effectively support their child. Therefore, we would like to take this opportunity to highlight some of the support we have in place and some useful tips for parents; if needed. The **first examination** in the final series takes place on **Wednesday 11th May**. Following this date, students will sit many examinations in a short time period. Therefore, it is essential that they use the build up to this period wisely and organise themselves accordingly.

Preparation for Success

We hosted our Preparation for Success evening for parents and students in October and a huge number of you attended this event. Through a combination of informative presentations, resource booklets, and some curriculum time, we hope that your child has embraced this opportunity and used the advice to devise their own personalised revision programme. The parental guide included in the pack will be particularly useful at this time.

After school Revision and Intervention

As you will be aware, after school sessions have been scheduled since October. This has been well attended by some students who have benefitted from specialist and targeted input. A refined timetable has been devised to ensure students prioritise those examinations that are imminent. The availability and frequency of sessions will increase in an effort to provide additional specialist directed revision. The timetable is available on our website for your information and is attached.

Food and Focus

Before each exam, we provide a "Food and Focus" service in the Science LRC. These sessions will be available at 8am and 12.30pm and will be hosted by a subject specialist in order to support students with the exam they are about to sit. In the morning, free hot and cold drinks as well as toast will also be provided to ensure students are well prepared for the task ahead (see attached timetable).

Exam anxiety

The realisation of the challenge ahead in Year 11 can be overwhelming for some and we are very proud of our highly successful support programme that is run by Juliette, our Student Chaplain. Some pupils refer themselves to Juliette in the drop-in sessions Tuesday and Thursday lunch, and others are referred by pastoral staff, subject teachers or

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tutors. If you have any concerns about how your child is coping with Year 11 and you would like to refer them, please do get in touch and we will ensure that we support them in any way we can. If you feel that this exam anxiety is above or beyond the level of stress that is normal and reasonable in the context of exams, there are also anonymous online services that our pupils have free access to, such as www.kooth.org.

What difference can parents make?

1. Keep up the motivation:

- Agree the balance between work and social life and stick to the agreement. Again, flexibility is the key – if a special night comes up, agree that they attend if they have completed the agreed amount of revision.
- All students fall behind, feel demotivated or overwhelmed, or struggle with the balance of social, work and school demands at times. When your child feels like this, talk to them about the issues, acknowledge their feelings and adopt a sensible attitude in wanting to find a solution.
- Be flexible – use the 80/20 rule. If your child is sticking to what they are supposed to be doing 80% of the time; they will be doing alright.
- Teenagers often take an all-or-nothing ‘catastrophic’ approach to difficulties – “I’ve failed so what’s the point?” This is often far from the reality and you can encourage them to see that everything they do, no matter how small, will make a difference to their final grade.

2. Revision:

- Provide resources for your child to be able to draw up revision resources.
- Ensure your child has a calm, quiet and clear space to revise.
- Allocate time to allow your child to talk you through their revision notes as this will boost their recall.
- Monitor and set limits on technology usage, especially gaming and social media as these can have a negative effect on a teenager’s state of mind.
- Communicate with your child’s teachers. They are happy to support and help in any way they can.

3. On the eve of the exam for parents:

- Avoid adding to the stress levels by ‘rising to the bait’ if your child pushes the boundaries. Shelve the battles that don’t need winning just yet!
- Help prepare your child for the exam – talk with them about when it starts, how long it lasts for, what are the main topics that might come up. Try not to ‘over-do’ this – they may have worked all day and have come downstairs to relax.
- Ensure your child has sufficient sleep. Encourage your child to avoid any blue screen devices which may stop them from settling.

4. Exam morning:

- Encourage a positive attitude towards exams.
- Ensure your child eats properly and is well hydrated.

May we take this opportunity to thank you for the continued support you have shown throughout the year. We have now reached the ‘home straight’ and want to ensure ALL our students are confident and supported upon entering the examination period. If you need any further information or feel there is anything we need to be aware of prior to the examinations; please do not hesitate to contact us.

We look forward to celebrating your child’s success in the summer.

Yours faithfully



Mrs. T. Wilkinson
Assistant Head teacher