

Dear Parent/Carer,

Progress Exams Update - Year 13

Year 13 students will begin their Progress Exams on Monday 6th December, and these will be completed by Wednesday 19th January. The amended progress exam timetable can now be found on the [school website](#), and students will receive their own printed copy. The timetable has changed after Christmas due to the Government requirements for on-site testing of all students before they return to school. We advise students to highlight the exams that are specific to them so they can structure their revision, in addition there is a range of guidance on the school website in relation to [exam preparation](#).

In the current climate and given the cancellation of external exams last year it is incredibly important that we share with you the latest information from the Department for Education (DfE) and Ofqual.

Contingency Planning

At present the intention in England and Wales is for external examinations to take place from Monday 16th May to Wednesday 29th June. As a contingency plan, the Department for Education and Ofqual have requested that schools collect evidence at three points in the year; the Progress Exams sat in the next few weeks will provide one of those pieces of evidence should it be required. Therefore, two further assessments will take place in the Spring and Summer term in the event that external examinations are cancelled. Both the DfE and Ofqual have assured schools that if this is the case, further guidance and a range of materials will be provided.

Progress Exams

Progress Exams provide students and teachers with an accurate picture of where individual students are at in their journey towards reaching their potential by the Summer series of examinations. We will use the Progress Exams to identify any gaps in knowledge and skills and plan how best to utilise the time between now and Summer 2022.

The Progress Exams are designed to replicate the experience of sitting external exams, students are expected to always follow JCQ guidance and our school behaviour policy. It is worth noting that any instance of malpractice such as having a mobile phone in a pocket or taking notes into exam room must now be reported to the relevant exam board. After the Progress Exam period students will reflect on their performance and will complete a series of tasks specifically designed to help them improve, school will however retain the actual exam papers as they may be required by the exam board in the event of a cancellation. In February each student will be provided with a 'Progress Exam results slip' to replicate receiving results in the Summer term. At this point Progress Exam results will also be available on Go4Schools.

Absence from Progress Exams

In order to ensure that Progress Exams are as robust as possible all students will sit exams at the same time and in the same conditions, we do appreciate though that illness and periods of isolation may cause students to miss some assessments. We have purposely spread exams over a longer period of time so should a student have to isolate or is unable to come to school as they are unwell, they will not miss all assessment opportunities. Any missed examinations will be rescheduled for their return to school, all assessment materials will be retained by staff until all students have sat them. Although it is important that students make every effort to come into school for their exams, they should still follow NHS guidance and not come in if they have any COVID-19 symptoms. NHS guidance can be found [here](#).

Access Arrangements

As with all internal and external examinations students who are entitled to Access Arrangements will have them provided. During each examination any student with Access Arrangements is reminded of their offer and asked to sign a document to confirm if and what they have used in that assessment. This information is then retained by school.

Equipment and Masks

As well as bringing the correct equipment to exams students will be expected to bring a mask to wear when walking into the sports hall, once sat down we suggest that the mask is put in a clear plastic bag (such as a sandwich bag) and placed on the floor under their chair or in a pocket. If a student would like to keep their mask on during an exam they can do so. Students are required to bring their own equipment/stationery to exams, further guidance can be found [here](#). If we are notified that a student will need to isolate whilst they are completing their progress exam we will remove them from the exam, in this event each situation will be assessed individually as to what the next steps will be and parents will be notified.

Support throughout the Progress Exam Period

Whilst it is imperative that we remind students and parents of the importance of Progress Exams we must also acknowledge the pressure students and families are under. We will of course continue to offer students support in school and would like to provide you with some information about how we have and will do this and what you can do at home.

- During tutor and PSCE sessions students have looked at how to cope with exam stress and what revision techniques they could employ. Students can bring the workbooks they have used home to review with you.
- Tutors, Progress Leaders, Student Support Services and Teaching Staff are all available to help students recognise that a certain level of stress is normal, that they can cope with it and work through it. Tutors and Student Support Services will check in on students who may have exhibited anxiety and remind them of some of the coping strategies they can use. A short video about understanding exam anxiety can also be found on the school website.
- We are developing a dedicated exam hub area for Year 13 with short information videos about how to prepare for exams for specific subjects. They include revision tips, specification

information and signposts to revision materials. Any announcements that impact exam content will also be communicated to students in lessons

- We have reminded teaching staff that homework for this period should be focused on revision activities and not new learning.

We do hope that we have answered any questions that you may have had about Progress Exams and we ask that students try their best, to be kind to themselves and others and be proud of what they can achieve and be as ready as they can be for their forthcoming assessments.

Please do remind your child to have a break over the Christmas period, spend quality time with friends and family and return to school refreshed for the term ahead.

Yours sincerely

The Leadership Group