



18th September 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

We have been really impressed with the start that most Year 11 students have made to the academic year with many teachers commenting on the engagement and motivation seen in lessons. We have also seen a brilliant uptake for the first of our revision inspire sessions this week.

Preparation for exams

The first set of mock examinations begin on **Monday 17th November**, with French and Spanish speaking exams the week prior to that. These exams are an opportunity for students to sit full GCSE papers in subjects and have the experience of sitting their exams in the same space in which they will complete their final examinations in the Summer. Teachers will give students guidance in lessons and via google classroom in terms of which paper they are sitting and the content they need to focus on for revision.

Attendance at Inspire sessions will be a great start to revision for these mock exams so please do encourage your child to attend as many as possible. We appreciate that some students have more than one subject available on some nights; where we feel there is a real need for a specific student to attend these in order to raise their attainment the Curriculum Leader or their class teacher will get in touch with you about this.

All students will need access to a scientific calculator for at least 8 exams in the Summer (2 Maths papers and all 6 Science papers), it is essential that all year 11 students have their own calculator for use at home as well as in lessons. The best calculators for students to buy are Casio FX-85GTCW or Casio FX-83GTCW, most large supermarkets sell these. Students' familiarity with a calculator can add many additional marks in both their Maths and Science GCSE.

Prior to the mock exams we are hosting two revision evenings for students and parents on

Thursday 2nd October 5.30-6.30pm

Monday 11th November 5.30-6.30pm

With a further session on Thursday 22nd January.

These are aimed at giving some practical topics on how to support your child during what we know can be a stressful year and also some strategies for revision in various subjects.

Setting and tiering

Students are set in some subjects in Year 11, specifically Maths, Science and Spanish, this is because these subjects have both Higher and Foundation tier papers. Students can access up to a grade 5 (Strong pass) on Foundation tier and from a grade 3 up to a grade 9 on Higher tier. Teachers and Curriculum Leaders in these subjects will decide on the best tier of entry for individual students based on how they have performed in lessons, in assessments and in mock exams. These decisions are based on professional judgement as to where we think the individual has the best chance of attaining the best possible outcome in that subject. In terms of next steps it is important to know that a grade 5 is worth the same at both Foundation and Higher tier.

Post 16 Options

We are hoping that many of our Year 11 students will choose to stay with us in September to join Longbenton High Sixth Form, we are hosting an open evening for this on **Thursday 4th December from 5-7pm**. This is a chance for you to see what courses we offer Post 16, speak to sixth form teachers and current students

Finally, just a reminder about the importance of year 11 students attending school every day. We have seen starkly at our school this summer the impact that poor attendance has on outcomes - only 8% of students with below 90% attendance achieved a 5+ strong pass in both English and Maths.

We are really looking forward to working with you across the next nine months to ensure that each year 11 student feels fully prepared for their GCSE exams and we look forward to joining you in celebrating their successes on Thursday 20th August.

Sarah Willis
Deputy Headteacher
Longbenton High School