



Tuesday 15th December 2020

Dear Parents,

Year 11 Practice Exams – January 2021

I am writing to you to inform you of the Year 11 Practice Exam season in January 2021. Under normal circumstances these examinations would have been held in the final two weeks of this term however to ensure that these examinations are reflective of a larger amount of curriculum content we have scheduled them to commence on Monday 25th January and end on Friday 5th February. The normal school timetable will run during this period. Any students not sitting examinations will be in lessons. Students sitting their examinations will be in the school sports hall or allocated examination room under exam conditions. The examination timetable is attached and also available on our website.

On 3rd December, the government announced further plans to support our current Year 11 students through their Summer 2021 exam series by providing advance notice of some of the topic areas that will be covered in exams. Additionally, in some subjects, supporting materials, such as formula sheets, will be provided on the day of the exams. This will allow students to focus on depth of understanding in these areas and target their revision in the run up to exams.

For those of you who are interested in the full detail of the guidance we are working to with our Year 11, these are the links to the two most recent updates from The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (OFQUAL): [click here](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-support-the-summer-2021-exams/guidance-to-support-the-summer-2021-exams) (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-support-the-summer-2021-exams/guidance-to-support-the-summer-2021-exams)

As any further guidance from the exam boards will not be available until late January/ early February and following discussions with Subject Leaders and students we have decided to continue with our practice exams as scheduled. This exam practice is important for many reasons:

- to ensure that our students are able to experience the rigour of an examination season
- to motivate and make sure that our students prepare appropriately for examinations
- to allow students who are eligible for exam concessions to learn how to use them effectively
- for teachers to act upon gaps in learning and misconceptions caused by the national lockdown in Year 10
- to give teachers and leaders robust data to be used in any potential Centre Assessed Grade scenario

We acknowledge that this term has been a particularly stressful one for our Year 11s with the uncertainty of the changes in the examination criteria and subject content as well as spells of remote learning through self-isolation. We have listened to their concerns and produced a booklet with subject information on the examinations to be sat and their content along with helpful revision information which is available [on our school website](https://tarletonacademy.org/parents/examinations-information/year-11-exam-information) (https://tarletonacademy.org/parents/examinations-information/year-11-exam-information), and has been shared with students via our Student Portal. We will also work with them on our PHSCE day on 14th January to embed appropriate revision strategies, coping mechanisms for exam stress and anxiety and how to prepare for the examination period.

Outstanding education at the heart of the community

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In January each student will receive a personalised examination timetable, a copy of the JCQ regulations, which state the conditions under which external examinations are held, and an equipment list. A copy of these regulations and the equipment list can be found on our website under Parent Information, Examination Information.

If we have students who are self-isolating during this examination period alternative arrangements will be made for them to sit the papers which may include them being completed at home. If this is necessary, further instructions and information will be given.

You will already be aware that fewer and fewer subjects have a large coursework element, and that there is an ever-increasing importance bestowed upon final examinations. We cannot stress enough, therefore, how important these practice exams are and how seriously they should be taken however we know how important it is for you and your families to be able to relax and rest over this Christmas period and be ready for the final two terms of their high school journey and their GCSEs.

Please also be aware that we will be doing everything we can to support your son/daughter through these exams whilst also ensuring their engagement. If you have any concerns about anxiety or motivation levels, please do not hesitate to contact us.

If you have any other queries regarding the Practice Exams please contact me via the school office or at enquiries@tarletonacademy.org

Yours sincerely,

T McLardy

Mr T McLardy
Assistant Headteacher – Curriculum and Assessment