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Friday 15 November 2021

Dear Year 11 Student and Parent/Carer

Exams in Summer 2022

I write to update you on the current government arrangements for exams in summer 2022, and the plans that we have in school to support your child in their preparations for these.

The Government's Decision

Earlier this term, the Department for Education (DfE) announced that they plan for exams to go ahead in the summer of 2022 and that arrangements for these will be as close to usual as possible. This means that, for most subjects, your child will sit terminal exams in our exam hall during May and June of 2022. Full details of the DfE's decision are available [here](#), including some amendments:

- There is a reduction in content in English Literature, History and Geography
- Practical work for science can be delivered via demonstration
- Art will be assessed solely on the student's portfolio
- Schools will receive advanced information about the focus of exams in February 2022
- Students will be provided with an updated formulae sheet in Maths, Physics and Combined Science

The government have also published information about the grade distribution this year. As you may be aware, the national distribution of grades in 2020 and 2021 had more students achieving higher grades. In an effort to avoid grade inflation, the intention is that the national grade distribution in 2023 (the year after your child sits their exams) will return to pre-pandemic levels (similar to 2019). The grade distribution in 2022 (the year your child sits their exams) will be a transition between the 2021 grades and the 2023 grades.

How We Will Support and Prepare Your Child

In any given year, young people (both individually and as a collective) worry about their exams. This is completely normal and an indication that they take them seriously. As a school, we are keen to do all that we can to diminish any unnecessary worry and we believe that critical to achieving this are:

- ensuring students are well informed about what is coming up
- providing plenty of opportunities to practice the routines of exams
- supporting in understanding what and how to revise
- explicitly teaching students a range of wellbeing and positive mental health strategies
- having a range of bespoke supports in place for students who need them

To this end, we have planned a full preparation and support package to enable your child to achieve their very best and maintain positive wellbeing. Please see over the page for a timeline of this.

We are conscious that many of you are keen to know about how you can support your child at home. Attached to this letter is a practical guide to supporting your child through their GCSE year, containing advice on supporting with wellbeing and mental health, as well as information about revision and learning.

I hope that this information is helpful. If you have any additional questions or suggestions relating to exams and preparations, please do not hesitate to contact me directly on ept@cardinalheenan.com.

Best wishes,

Lizzie Stockton-Pitt
Senior Assistant Headteacher (Quality of Education)



19 November	<p>Progress Reports Issued</p> <p>This will allow you to see how you are getting on so far this year, including your most likely grade at the end of the year and a reflection of your behaviour for learning and homework.</p>
25-26 November	<p>English Language Mock Exams</p> <p>This will be your first experience of sitting an exam in the Sports Hall. This will allow you to experience the routines and procedures of exams, as well as practise preparing for an exam. It will also allow you to experience what it feels like to sit an exam.</p>
2 December	<p>How to Revise and Looking After your Wellbeing</p> <p>Part of this day will be off timetable and out of lessons, supporting you in understanding how to structure your revision, both for your mock and real exams. We will also spend some time discussing strategies that you can use to support good mental wellbeing during what can be an intense period.</p>
6-10 December	<p>Subject Specific Revision Lessons</p> <p>In your subject lessons this week your teacher will talk to you about how to revise that subject; effective Spanish revision is very different to effective RE revision. During this lesson your teacher will also direct you towards useful resources and websites.</p>
6-17 December	<p>Spanish and French Mock Speaking Tests</p> <p>Your Spanish or French teacher will give you a specific time slot for this and help you to understand what will happen and how to prepare.</p>
4-14 January	<p>Mock Exams</p> <p>This will give you the chance to practise preparing for and sitting full exam papers in most subjects. These exams will be in the Sports Hall, giving you another chance to practise the routines of exams. This will also prepare you for what it feels like to revise for multiple exams at the same time, like you will need to in the summer. After your mock exams, your teachers will provide you with specific feedback on what you did well and how to improve. They will also adjust what they are teaching you in lessons to revise some of the topics and skills that your class found difficult in the exam.</p>
11 February	<p>Progress Reports Issued</p> <p>Informed by how you did in your mock exams, this report will show your final predicted grades. It will also reflect your behaviour for learning in school and the quality of your homework and revision.</p>
14-17 February	<p>SLT Interviews</p> <p>You will have an individual 15-minute meeting with a member of the Senior Leadership Team, to discuss how you got on in your mocks, what you hope to do next year, how you are coping and how we can help you to get there.</p>
10 March	<p>How to Revise Evening</p> <p>This is an opportunity for you and your parent/carers to get some information about how to tackle your final few months of preparation, covering both approaches to revision and wellbeing.</p>
1 April	<p>Behaviour for Learning and Homework Reports</p> <p>As we move into your final term at Cardinal Heenan, you will receive a report reflecting your current behaviour for learning and homework/revision. This is timed so that if there are any issues you are able to resolve them for your final weeks of preparation.</p>
4 May	<p>Exams Information Evening</p> <p>This is an opportunity for you and your parent/carers to find out final information about how exams will run and the support available for you during this time.</p>
16 May - 28 June	<p>GCSE Examination Period</p> <p>This is the final examination period. We will let you know your final day in school nearer the time.</p>
25 August	<p>Results Day</p>