

28 February 2022

Dear Parents, Carers and Students,

Public Examination Arrangements: Summer 2022

I am writing to update you on the forthcoming summer public examinations.

Ofqual, The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation, have issued the following statement to schools: *'The government is clear that students entering GCSEs, AS or A levels in 2022 should expect to take exams in the summer and complete any non-exam assessments in the usual way throughout the year.'*

There has been a number of mitigations in recognition of the fact that students' education has been disrupted by the pandemic. Following a joint DfE and Ofqual consultation and as published on the examination board websites on 7 February 2022, students have been given extra support by receiving advance information on GCSE and A levels to allow them to focus their revision.

Year 11 and 13 students will be informed by their subject teachers exactly what to revise in preparation for their exams. In addition, please note that:

- Students taking GCSEs in English literature, history and geography will not need to cover the usual range of content in the exams; the examination boards have published information on their websites on how this will work for each of their specifications in these subjects.
- Students taking GCSE mathematics will be given in their exams copies of formulae.
- Students taking GCSE physics will be given in their exams a sheet covering all the equations they might need to apply.
- The 2022 examination timetable has been scheduled in such a way that there is a 10-day gap between examination papers in the same subject.
- Students who unavoidably miss one or more examination papers in a subject will be able to achieve a grade through the special consideration process.
- We understand that the 2022 summer grade distribution will be midway between 2019 and 2021.

We will, of course, update you should the situation change.

Students in Year 11 and 13 will shortly receive a personalised exam timetable published on Edulink. If you have any questions or concerns about the timetable, please contact the Exams Office by emailing Exams@wealdgs.org. Students with examination clashes will be spoken to as soon as possible to clarify their individual arrangements.

You will also find attached the JCQ Information for Candidates in examinations and NEAs which all students must read prior their examinations.

Non-Examination Assessments (NEA)

In the coming weeks, students in Year 11 and 13 will be completing their NEAs in relevant subjects. Each subject has set their own deadline for completion.

Students will be given their 'raw' NEA mark by their teacher, e.g. 26/40, by Thursday 31 March 2022, with the exception of Art, Drama, PE and the EPQ, where the date of release has been set nationally. Please note that teachers do not grade the NEAs, the school submits the marks to the exam board who determine the final grade.

Appealing an NEA mark

The grounds for appealing an NEA mark awarded in school are:

- Evidence the mark scheme has not been properly applied.
- Evidence that necessary procedures have not been properly complied with.

To submit an appeal please download and complete the "Internal Appeals Form" which you can find on the Noticeboard tab on Edulink.

The completed form must be emailed to exams@wealdgs.org by Friday 22 April 2022. Please note the deadlines differ for Art, Drama, PE and EPQ. Details will be shared a later date.

There is a £50 fee for lodging an appeal, which must be paid via Parentpay when the appeal is submitted. If your appeal is successful this will be refunded. If you experience any difficulty accessing your ParentPay account, please contact the Finance Department at financequeries@wealdgs.org. Students will not be excluded from appealing due to financial hardship. If this is the case, please contact the Finance Department.

Study Leave

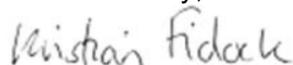
The start of the study leave period for Year 11 and 13 students will be confirmed closer to the time and full details will be shared with all students in advance, including how to return textbooks.

Exam Breakfasts

We will be offering all students an exam breakfast, available in the canteen from 8am, on the morning of their examinations. This is free of charge, and we do hope your child will take us up on this opportunity.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank students for their hard work and determination in the run up to the exams.

Yours sincerely,



Mr K Fidock
Assistant Headteacher

Tips and Advice

1. How to best start an examination day

- Place a copy of their examination timetable in a shared space in the house and know when their examinations are taking place.
- Ensure they have a water bottle each day (with no label) and a fully stocked clear pencil case; black pens are needed.
- Students need to be in school in good time: by 8.45am for morning sessions and by 1.15pm for afternoon sessions.
- Try to keep them settled the night before, off technology and away from the books, and into bed at a good time.
- Provide them with a good breakfast as they will need a lot of energy to perform well.

2. Keep good habits

- Encourage your child to avoid stimulants, such as caffeine. Drugs and alcohol impede energy and concentration in the long term.
- Do not encourage your child to cut out all the enjoyment from her/his life.
- Encourage your child to break her/his revision workload into manageable chunks and to take frequent breaks when revising; psychologists say we can only concentrate properly for 30-45 minutes at a time.
- Help your child to eat well by maintaining a good blood sugar level and avoiding highs and lows of energy. A diet rich in slow-release foods such as bread, rice, pasta, fruit and vegetable is essential.
- Make sure that your child drinks lots of water, hydration helps concentration.
- Ask your child to think about when and where they work best. Not everyone is a morning person, and some people do not find the library a productive place to work. There is no one best place or time to work – it is about what works best for each individual student.
- Encourage your child to keep active: even a short walk can be beneficial. Exercising is one of the quickest and most effective ways to de-stress. Fresh air clears the head and aids focus.

3. Talk about stress as a physical symptom – this will help to normalise it, which can make it feel less overwhelming. Explain that when stress reaches a certain intensity, it can lead to heightened physical and psychological awareness. This normally enables us to perform well under pressure, but it can overreact or fail to reset properly, and this can make us feel nervous.

4. Talk openly about how you cope with your own stressful situations, so your child has a positive role model for managing her/his emotions and time. This might include having a relaxing bath or writing a week-by-week plan to manage your workload.

5. Teach relaxation techniques using basic breathing exercise through slow, deep breathing (the in-breath should be shorter than the out-breath; counting in for 3 and out for 5); using guided imagery (close your eyes and think about a safe place you have been where you have felt totally relaxed, identify details about what the place looks and feels like, and focus on these, while breathing calmly).

6. Boost positivity and self-esteem by enabling your child to be practical about their preparations. Sentences such as, "You are more than your results" can be very powerful; talk about what they are good at and enjoy. Whilst examination results are important, and everyone wants their child to do the best they can, boosting self-esteem will help them to feel good, and achieve their best.

7. Address negative thinking by:

- Identifying negative thoughts, and how these thoughts make your child feel.
- Thinking about how these thoughts and feelings link to behaviours and physical symptoms.

- Going back to the original thought and "test the reality" by suggesting different ways of thinking about the situation.
8. Be mindful about what to say, or not to say, when talking to your child about the exams; as parents and carers, it is very normal to feel anxious about your child's examinations, however, the risk is that your child might absorb your anxiety and become even more stressed.
 9. Discourage them from discussing examination questions in great detail after the exam has finished.

For further guidance, the NHS has published information for parents on supporting their child during exams and you can find the link below.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/coping-with-exam-stress/>