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Year 10 Trial Examinations

Dear Parent/carer,

I am writing to you at this important time in your son/daughter's education to make you aware of the support and guidance we offer our students preparing for their GCSE exams.

In the week beginning 25 June 2018, our Year 10 Students will complete Trial Examinations. This week will be very challenging for the students as we aim to recreate the experience as closely as possible to the external GCSEs and so examinations are held both in the morning and afternoon of every day. Students will be expected to attend normal sessions when they are not due to be in an exam.

In order to ensure that students fully benefit from this experience, it is important that they begin to prepare for these in several ways. Firstly, they will need to ensure that they are revising each evening and that this becomes a routine so that they continue revision into and throughout year 11. They must use a revision timetable to help with this and ensure that they have covered all relevant topics. They should be guided by their learning tutors and the feedback they have received in sessions in order to create a personal timetable that focuses on their own requirements. If your son/daughter is unsure as to what they should be revising, please contact their learning tutors directly via email or phone; they will be more than happy to support with your enquiries.

Students should be completing 2 hours of homework or revision each evening after school and 4 hours at the weekend. However, these should be structured in 20 minute slots in order to ensure maximum retention. After 20 minutes of study, students should take a 5 minute "brain break" and then return to test the content they have just revised. After a second 5 minute brain break, they should spend 10 minutes reviewing their test and setting next step targets for themselves. This should be repeated regularly.

Despite focusing on their studying, students also need to ensure they are taking care of their health. This means they need to understand the value of a balanced diet, exercise and a full

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night's sleep. Using and looking at screens after 9pm is a poor choice as this disrupts sleep patterns. This includes mobile phones, tablets, iPads or gaming devices. Exercise can help reduce stress and increase oxygen flow to the brain and can therefore provide a useful break between study sessions. Food high in sugar will create a quick energy boost, but this will be followed by a slump in energy; the best breakfast foods include slow-release carbohydrates such as whole rolled porridge oats, whole grain bread or low-sugar muesli as they provide slow-release energy. Add a protein food, such as milk, yoghurt or eggs in order to feel full for longer. If our young people get into these habits now, they will find it easier to cope this time next year.

Student anxiety is often very high at this time and we would like to take this opportunity to assure you that this is perfectly normal and in most cases helpful as it acts as a strong motivator. However, for some students, anxiety can become overwhelming and this is unhelpful. Please contact your son/daughter's personal tutor if you have any concerns about their well-being.

At College your son/daughter will have the opportunity to discuss any concerns they have with both their personal and learning tutors. However, if you or they are still concerned, please speak with either myself or their Head of Year, Mr Harvey.

Kind Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carole Noble', written in a cursive style.

Carole Noble

Raising Standards Leader and Head of Year 11