

MALTON SCHOOL

EXAMS NEWSLETTER



ISSUE 2

February 2006

Year 11 New Year Edition

Welcome to our second exam special, where we address some common issues that occur each year as students approach final exams.

Entry Dates

Students and parents should be aware of particular dates relating to exams.

Tuesday, 31 January

Initial entries are made for GCSE subjects. Subject leaders check these lists and make amendments if errors are spotted.

Thursday, 9 February

A special exam assembly to hand out entry lists to students, plus a letter to parents explaining the entry process and its implications.

Friday, 17 February

Final entry date for all exam boards. Minor amendments (for example to level of entry) can be made without fee until **21st April**. After this a fee is incurred by any changes. Personal examination timetables giving subject, date and time will be issued to all students in the near future. We recommend these are displayed prominently at home—occasionally we have had to wake students from slumbers to get them to their exam!

Important dates

A reminder:

Mon 20-25 February 2006 - Half-term

Friday 7 April. Staff day and start of Easter vacation for student.

Monday 24 April – start of summer term.

| Countdown | |
|-----------|-------------|
| Week | ⌚ |
| 6 Feb | -11 |
| 13 | -10 |
| 20 | Half term |
| 27 | -9 |
| 6 Mar | -8 |
| 13 | -7 |
| 20 | -6 |
| 27 | -5 |
| 3 Apr | -4 |
| 10 | Easter |
| 17 | |
| 24 | -3 |
| 1 May | -2 |
| 8 | -1 |
| 15 | 1st Exam |
| 22 | Study leave |

The build up to exams

GCSE exams will start on Friday, 19 May, with Citizenship.

If we work backwards from here there are 4 school weeks after Easter, 9 weeks after half-term, and only 11 weeks from now.

Study Leave

We anticipate study leave being granted from Friday, 26 May. A special revision timetable related to the exam timetable will commence on Thursday, 18 May. Full details in our next exam newsletter.

School Leaving date.

Students are not legally permitted to leave school until the last Friday in June. This is 30 June this year.

Students need to consider starting a revision programme early—a little before the Easter holidays. They should make full use of this “holiday”, and plan when and what to revise, and importantly when to relax and not work! Parents can help here—planning is not an easy skill.

Part-time work

We know that the majority of our Year 11 students engage in some part-time work. This gives students some spending money, independence, and work experience. We do not see this necessarily as a problem: it need not clash with study, or with revision and preparation for final GCSE's, providing the time commitment is moderate. Our advice is:

- It should never be used as an excuse for non-completion of work, absence or lateness.
- It should form part of a planned approach to work and study.
- It should not increase at half-term, and certainly not at Easter.
- As we approach exams, it is worth considering reducing part-time work commitments.
- Part-time work should not be undertaken in between GCSE examinations.

Family Holidays

We always encourage families to arrange their holidays during the long periods of official school holidays, rather than in school term time.

This is particularly true in these final months leading up to the exams. We were amazed and disappointed last year when some families took holidays in the summer term, very close to GCSE exams. Please give your son/daughter the best opportunity to be well-prepared for these final exams.

Coursework.

Coursework will be all but complete by the end of this term. There may be opportunity in some subjects for minor improvements after Easter.

The final date for submission of marks to the exam boards are:

AQA and EDEXCEL 30 April 2006

OCR 12 May 2006

It is important to realise that these are final submission dates. To meet them, teachers must mark work in advance, and in many departments teachers have to moderate their marking. Hence internal deadlines for completion and submission of coursework. In some subjects staff can (and will) return work after internal assessment for minor improvements, in other areas this is not permitted.

Jargon buster: Moderation

Teachers of a subject sit together and mark samples of work from different groups, to ensure they are all marking to the same standard.

Art: Terminal Test: Papers given out *Wednesday, 1 February*. Four weeks only plus half-term for all sketchbook preparation.

Terminal Test: Completed final piece worksheets and sketchbook by *Friday, 31 March*.

Exhibition: All work mounted and displayed on the wall, 3 projects plus terminal test. **Deadline Friday, 12 May**

Business Studies: Marketing section to complete and any improvements need to be made by *Monday, 20 March*.

Citizenship: Both pieces of coursework complete (apart from absentees). Students may re-write to improve their grade - deadline *Friday, 17 March*.

DT: Food/Textiles Good progress so far. Students are now working on the development of a final solution to their task. Final deadline *Friday, 3 March*.

DT: Graphics: Varied progress to date reflecting student motivation. Projects need to be completed by *Monday 3 April*

English: Folders (of five pieces of work) close to completion, though they may be given time to improve or substitute work. Folders must be finalised by *17 March*.

French: The deadline for the final assignment is *Friday, 10 March*.

Geography: A newspaper which uses maps, graphs, pictures and written text to examine development issues in the Amazon. Enough time is given for completion in class but students can do additional work. Deadline *Friday, 10 February*.

History: Final assignment—an investigation of the success or failure of Haig's leadership in the Battle of the Somme 1916. Deadline *Friday, 24 March*.

ICT: Board Set assignment complete. Main section of 2nd project - deadline *Friday, 24 March*.

Maths: Finishing touches to the two pieces of coursework. Deadline *Friday, 17 February*.

Music: composition coursework well on the way, with most students having started their second and final piece. Deadline *Monday, 27 March*

PE GCSE: Personal Exercise Programme—final deadline *6 January*. Practical assessments are due in *April*.

Science: All coursework complete (apart from absentees).

Coursework contributes a vital proportion of the final grade, so must be completed to the best of a student's ability for them to achieve their full potential

Mock Exams

Mock exams are marked and graded according to exam board mark-schemes. These will be returned to students, and feedback on how to improve will be given. This has already happened in some subjects. Others find the best time to return and review is closer to the exam (April and May). Mock exams are always as close in standard to the real thing as possible. *Please note they are not set to be easier or harder than GCSE exams, as some rumours would suggest.*

Year 11 Reports

Full reports are written for GCSE subjects, giving a picture of current progress and offering advice on how to improve in the final months. Reports also give summary grades for attainment, effort, behaviour and homework.

Effort and behaviour. Excellent or Good for Effort are expected, as are Excellent or Good for Behaviour. Relatively few Sometimes Poor are given, so should they occur they do indicate a problem that needs resolving. Often Poor is very unusual, so indicate serious problems.

Jargon buster: Current grade – based on the mark in the mock exam, together with any coursework or module tests already assessed, a grade *ABCDEFGG is awarded according to GCSE standards

Projected grade – what staff expect can be achieved with continued hard work, and progress similar to that achieved by students in the past. Split grades may be used to indicate borderline cases.

Note – this improvement cannot be expected to just happen automatically– it needs working for

Leavers Prom - Wednesday, 24 May 2006
90s Nights - 5 and 6 April 2006

Involvement without excuses!

Coursework detentions

These may sound like punishments, but are really a teacher's way of saying that a student has not fulfilled their potential, and is being given a chance to do so. They are intended as a way of helping students who have difficulty organising themselves.

Coursework—how can parents help?

You cannot do the work for someone, but you can offer support, suggestions and advice

- Ask your son or daughter what coursework remains to be completed, and how it is progressing.
- When are the deadlines?
- Are there any problems meeting these?
- Help with planning to avoid bottlenecks in work when two or three deadlines coincide.
- Have they responded to feedback from their teachers?