

MALTON SCHOOL

EXAMS NEWSLETTER



ISSUE 2

February 2007

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.

Friday 2 February

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

Tuesday 6 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 9 February

Final entry date for all exam boards. Any amendments following this date are likely to incur a fee.

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:

Tues 6 February 2007 - Reports home

Mon 12-16 February - Half-term

Mon 26 February - Year 11 Photographs

Wed 28 February - Year 11 Parents' Evening

Wed 7 March - Year 11 GCSE Science Module

Friday 30 March - Staff day and start of Easter vacation for student.

Monday 16 April - start of summer term.

The build up to exams

GCSE exams will start on Wednesday, 16 May, with General Studies.

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 once examinations have commenced. A special revision timetable related to the exam timetable will commence on Thursday, 17 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 29 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.

Countdown

Week	⌚
5 Feb	-11
12	Half term
19	-10
26	-9
5 Mar	-8
12	-7
19	-6
26	-5
2 Apr	Easter
9	
16	-4
23	-3
30	-2
7 May	-1
14	1st Exam Study leave

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.

It is important to realise that final submission dates are set externally. 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 **Thursday, 1 February**. Four weeks only plus half-term for all sketchbook preparation.

Terminal Test: Completed final piece worksheets and sketchbook by **Friday, 30 March**.

Exhibition: All work mounted and displayed on the wall, 3 projects plus terminal test. **Deadline Friday, 11 May**

Business Studies: Finance section to complete and any improvements need to be made by **Friday, 16 March**.

Citizenship: Both pieces of coursework complete (apart from absentees). Students may re-write to improve their grade - deadline **Friday, 16 March**.

DT: Food: Good progress so far. Students are now working on the development of a final solution to their task. Final deadline **week ending Friday, 16 March**.

DT: Textiles: Practical deadline **week ending Friday, 23 February**. Folder deadline **week ending Friday 16 March**.

DT: Graphics: Varied progress to date reflecting student motivation. Projects need to be completed by **Friday 30 March**.

English: Folders (of five pieces of work) close to completion by **Friday, 9 February**, though they may be given time to improve or substitute work. Folders must be finalised by **23 March**.

French: The deadline for the final assignment is **Friday, 9 March**.

DE: The deadline for the final assignment is **Friday, 9 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 **Wednesday, 7 February**.

History: Final assignment—an investigation of the success or failure of Haig's leadership in the Battle of the Somme 1916. Deadline **Thursday, 29 March**.

ICT: Unit 2 and any re-submissions for Unit 1 must be in for **Tuesday, 1 May**.

Maths: All Sets, excluding Top Sets, Deadline **Wednesday, 28 February**. Top Sets deadline **Monday, 5 May**.

Music: composition coursework well on the way, with most students having started their second and final piece. Deadline **Wednesday, 28 March**.

PE GCSE: Personal Exercise Programme - final deadline **18 January**. Practical assessments are due in **April**.

Science: Students improving completed coursework.

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 *ABCDEFGH 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 - Provisionally Wednesday, 23 May 2007
The Colour of Music Concert - 28 & 29 March 2007

Involvement without excuses!

Coursework Catch-up Sessions

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?