



Ripon Grammar School

18 June 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

Year 9 exams take place next week (24-27 June), and I wanted to email to give some information and expectations of our students during this week.

- **Exams are in the sports hall** – this is the first time that our students will have experienced an examination in the sports hall. It is a large space, and considerably more formal than the HL rooms where Y7&8 examinations have been. This is to give the students an experience of where their real GCSE exams will be in two years' time.
- **Be prepared** - I want all our students to be prepared for their examinations so that they can practice and refine their processes at this point ahead of their GCSE years. In form time prior to half-term, we spent several sessions looking at effective revision techniques. This is their opportunity to practice their revision strategies and work out what is appropriate for them and allows them to be successful. I also want students to be prepared with their equipment, ensuring they have what they need for each paper, but also ensuring that they have the correct revision materials each day so that they can be productive during the session.
- **These exams are a practice!** - our students should be prepared, take them seriously but achieve balance. Exams induce anxiety for nearly all of us. That nervousness should pull us into action to do something about it – revise effectively, get prepared, clarify information, **but** we need to help students achieve balance by still being active during the week, sleeping and eating well, attending normal extra-curricular and outside of school activities and having fun. Students will achieve if they take their exams seriously but are relaxed. It is our job as teachers and parents to look after them and give some context where needed.

The students have done a lot of work in form time and in assemblies this year regarding growth mindset. I hope that the simplest summary of the messages we have discussed is to reframe threats and see them as opportunities. Hopefully our students can see these exams as an opportunity to demonstrate how much they know (even if it isn't everything!) and an opportunity to practice their exam craft, rather than a threat that should be feared.

Students received timetables this morning and I will give more information to them about their exams in assembly tomorrow morning.

Yours sincerely

Mr Harding
Head of Year 9

Founded in Saxon Times, re-founded in 1555

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