



AMPLEFORTH COLLEGE

*from* The HEAD OF UPPER SIXTH

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Friday, 15 March 2024

Dear parents and carers,

I am writing to inform you that the results of the recent Year 13 mock examinations are now available to view on My School Portal. The year group has generally performed well on what were a series of challenging examinations, assessing much of the content taught from day one of each course to the week before the half term holiday and largely completed over a three-day period. Our students prepared for these examinations with pleasing maturity, attention to detail and determination, and this approach is reflected in many of the grades that have been awarded. Inevitably, a small number of students will be disappointed that they have not achieved the standard to which they will be aspiring in the summer public examinations, and we will be carefully reviewing their performances with their teachers and tutor in the coming weeks to identify how they might close the gap in the time that remains before the examination season commences in May.

To support all students in realising their ambitions, the College has established the following preparation programme, which begins today:

- An individual mock review meeting with the Head of Year 13, the Assistant Head of Year 13 or the Deputy Head Academic in which students will review their progress across each course, their performance in the mock exams, and the effectiveness of their revision strategies prior to Easter and beyond.
- Supervised evening revision support for those students who find independent work particularly challenging and would benefit from more explicit staff direction.
- An online revision resource for parents offering advice on what good revision looks like and on how you might best support your daughter or son in making the best use of their time while away from the college. Details of this are in the weekly update.
- Subject-specific revision techniques will be demonstrated and rehearsed in the classroom by teachers during lessons.
- Advice from tutors on how to design a balanced and well-planned revision timetable, centred on 20-25 hours of study each week over the holiday period.
- Subject-specific holiday work designed to consolidate essential knowledge and examination technique.
- The summer term will see weekly "Twilight sessions" to enable teachers to revise, re-teach or assess the course content as required.

- The summer term will be one in which all year-groups pull together to ensure an optimal environment for exam preparation and success. Activities that might have taken students or teachers away from the classroom during this period have been rescheduled to other terms. The time left is precious, and we need to make the most of it. Lessons and prep will be sacrosanct.
- In the light of the last comment, students will remain on timetable until their exams have concluded. Some exceptions will be made: working with the team around each child, we will ensure that those who would benefit from a more independent approach to revision are afforded this opportunity while those who need a supported environment of timetabled lessons can benefit from appropriate classroom provision. We would welcome your support in ensuring that students in the latter group benefit from this approach.
- A “Recall Timetable” will also be developed, whereby the timetable is modified to create extra lessons as individual exams approach; we don’t want content to fade from students’ memories. As certain subjects finish early in the exam season, students will use all teaching periods to revise for the subjects that remain to be examined.
- BTEC students will finish soon after Easter and they can expect an increase in contact time with their A level teachers.

The evidence of student performance since the November mock exams suggests that the year group has put themselves in a strong position to do well in the summer examinations. By supporting your daughters and sons in negotiating the final weeks of their studies, you will be contributing considerably to their prospects of success when results are published in August. A complete Holiday work report is to be found on <https://ampleforth.myschoolportal.co.uk/> (under *My Children / Subject Reports* – use *drop down Select Report box on top right to find holiday work*). We hope you will hold your child to their responsibilities in relation to this work.

As Mr Roberts has previously communicated, an academic summer term is not about becoming an academic hot-house. Rather, it is wholly consistent with the holistic education we are renowned for delivering. As final examinations approach, every member of our community—classmate, housemate, teacher, member of support staff, parent and student—has a role to play in bringing the academic year to a successful resolution.

Yours sincerely,

Christopher Vowles

Head of Upper Sixth