

The Swaminarayan

Education is that which liberates

Dear Parents, Guardians, Pupils and Friends,

Theme for the week

The theme for next week is “**Revision Skills.**” I have written about it below.

GCSE & A Level Examinations

These examinations will begin on Monday, 13th May 2019. The venue for all the examinations will be the Science Block except for a few larger examinations, which will be held in the Yogi Hall.

Study Leave for S4, 5 & U6

Pupils in S4, 5 and U6 will start their study leave from Monday, 13th May 2019. Pupils in S5 and U6 will therefore have their last formal lessons on Friday 10th May 2019. I will write something about both the groups in the Swaminarayan of next week. S4 will, of course return to school soon after the majority complete their examinations. There are only a handful of pupils writing French, Mathematics and Business Studies. I will publish the precise date of their return next week.

Best Revision

The best revision involves active current engagement with the content; passively reading through textbooks or copying out notes will not ensure a thorough understanding of the subject content.

You have access to lots of revision resources given by your teachers. Mostly importantly:

- Establish what you know: by writing out in ‘mind-maps’ or summary notes about the topic. This will get your brain ready to learn and make you aware of the gaps in knowledge.
- Build your revision: around what you already know about each topic: Memory works best when information is structured, patterned and linked to existing knowledge. This will allow you to make better sense of new information. The more we understand, the less we have to remember by rote.
- Pick out key words or themes: from notes and textbooks. This will aid understanding and frees your memory to learn more. Key phrases, laws and words can be transferred to revision cards and used to recall more challenging concepts.
- Use all your senses: Some pupils will remember best when they have been told facts, others when they have seen them written down. Some recall better when listening to information they have recorded, while others remember facts if they are displayed in a visually appealing way (e.g. diagrams or flow charts). Using a variety of senses keeps revision more engaging and ensures longer lasting recall.
- Test yourself: Answering past paper questions under timed conditions ensures you are familiar with the exam conditions. You can then mark the work using the mark schemes to see what areas of the course need bolstering. Actively looking for areas where you may lose marks is important and caution must be taken not to be too generous with the marking. Another form of self-assessment is by “teaching” a topic to a friend or obliging family member.

- Predict: When you are feeling confident about a topic you can use the syllabus to come up with different types of questions that could potentially be asked in the exam; the more challenging the better! Then constructing model answers or answering the questions under exam conditions can help you to check your understanding.
- Overlearning and repetition are vital. Revisiting topics regularly reinforces knowledge and ensures the memories are longer lasting. You can use the reserve time at the end of the day to quickly recap on recently covered topics to keep them fresh in your minds.

Parents

- Parents often feel anxious about whether their son/daughter is revising adequately and sufficiently. It is important that you are aware of what is expected of your son/daughter, and that they feel supported and have all their practical needs met in order to revise in a healthy way.
- Your role is essentially to help the pupils achieve the optimal balance between being too relaxed, and suffering too much with anxiety and stress.
- Try not to make too many demands during revision and exam period. Also, try not to expose them to your own anxieties about their exam performance. This can often lead to arguments which will add stress and hinder revision.
- Impress upon them the need to have a clear distinction between revision time and free time. Short intense bursts of effective revision with regular scheduled breaks as explained above is far more effective than long slots half-heartedly skimming notes.
- If you feel that they are overdoing it, then suggest they have a break. It is helpful that they are realistic about what is reasonable and effective. Pupils often lose perspective during revision period. If they seem excessively anxious, remind them that whilst exams are important, their whole life does not depend on them, even though it may seem like it at the moment.
- You can offer help by making store up on paper and other stationary with plenty of healthy snacks in the fridge; by helping them with the timetable which sets a routine to meal times, breaks, etc. A structured routine is essential during revision and examinations. Promoting regular exercise and sufficient sleep will also have a big impact. Go out with them for a walk if that is the only way to get them out for fresh air.

Examination Timetables

You should have a personal copy of your examination timetable, which is available on the Parents Portal.

Examination Days

On the day of the examination try to have a good breakfast/lunch and have plenty of water. Research has shown that this helps with exam performance. Make sure you get to the exam in plenty of time, take deep breaths to relax and ensure you read all the instructions and questions carefully before answering. Highlight key words or phrases if that helps. After each exam, though it is so tempting, try not to discuss the paper with your peer; it will only make you anxious; be positive and move on to the next exam.

Information and Summary Rules for Students Doing Exams (in particular “External” Exams – GCSE and A levels (GCE): Mr Cotton writes:

Candidates must:

Do their best fairly, according to JCQ rules. You must be seen to be doing so!

Have the equipment they need for their examination; pens, pencils, ruler...and necessary “*spare*s”.

No Mobile phones (or other similar electronic equipment) are allowed; if you have such, they must be switched off and brought to the front along with any other unauthorised materials. Pencil cases must be transparent, or use a clear plastic bag instead. Do not bring bags or textbooks or anything else which may be deemed unauthorised. Scientific calculators are normally allowed, except for those exams that explicitly forbid them. Do not use Tippex or similar (Cross out any mistakes clearly!). Do bring your Entry Statement/s / Time-table (But do not write on them). Bring suitable photo. I.D. if you are not known to the Supervisor/s.

Behave in an orderly fashion before, during and after each exam. Follow the instructions of the Supervisor.

Arrive in good time and be on time for each exam session and wait QUIETLY outside the examination room or in other allocated place before each Exam Session. Definite start and finish times cannot be given for a variety of reasons but do note

Nominal start times:

am. Exams 9.00

pm. Exams 1.30 (sometimes 2.00, occasionally 1.00), but in some cases could begin as early as Noon.]

You should have and be aware of your timetable accordingly. A summarised version of the main whole School time-table is available on the Website. You should also be able to access your Personal Unofficial External Exam Time-table Statement via The School-Base On-line Portal.

Exams Rooms will be as indicated and notified. In most cases this will be one of the two rooms at the back of the Science Block for GCSE and GCE (A level) depending on candidate numbers and students involved and may be subject to change. For larger candidate numbers and in other circumstances, there may be a need to use other rooms (inc. Yogi Hall) in the school also.

When allowed in pupils must sit in their given place, as instructed. This will normally be in Candidate Number order.

Familiarize themselves with the Exam Notices and Warnings which are displayed (and which you have been given) and obey them.

Students with more than one exam in a session would normally do them pretty much one after the other as instructed. Any “Break” if necessary would have to be minimal and similarly suitably supervised. If the number/time involved is more than can be fitted in, it is permissible after suitable discussion to arrange a longer Break including over Lunch. Again candidates would have to be closely supervised during such an Interval including while eating. Revision would not necessarily be disallowed during such Interval, but outside communication + with other students would be.

Similar considerations would apply to Toilet Breaks during an exam. Only go if absolutely necessary and ask first. Do not go without suitable Supervision, Otherwise you will not be allowed back in. (It is not allowed to leave an exam room unsupervised till at least one hour after the exam has started from the Nominal time.) This and any other appropriate queries if necessary during an Exam should only be brought to the attention of Invigilators by putting your hand up suitably. Do not under any circumstances shout out. If absolutely necessary a “HHHHMMM” would be allowed and/or quickly quietly addressing the nearest Invigilator.

If in doubt or you have any queries, please consult you teacher/form-tutor/me... as necessary. Please do this in good time!

Please note the School is bound to report any infringement of the rules to the Exam Boards.

This is treated as “MALPRACTICE”, whether it is accidental or not. They will deal with this according to their procedures and the result is may be DISQUALIFICATION!

There may be some “leeway”/adjustment on these rules for School Internal Exams but even here we may deal with Infringements as “Cheating”, whether accidental or not!

One final thing if I may say, exams are obviously very important, so do take them seriously and revise

hard and prepare yourself accordingly. But no purpose is served if you get overly worried and this impedes your ability to think clearly. So do keep calm and keep things in perspective, and do incorporate suitable breaks into your Revision Schedule. + Best wishes And GOOD LUCK.

Our best wishes are with all the pupils who are writing their examinations this summer.

Yours sincerely,

Nilesh Manani