



January 2023

Dear Parent / Carer

### Preparations for Year 11 PPEs and Final GCSE Examinations

I would like to thank all parents for their continued support with their sons and daughters as they prepare for their final set of PPEs and for the GCSE examinations later this year.

Pre-Public Examinations will take place from 6<sup>th</sup> February, with some external BTEC examinations taking place on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> January, for Health and Social Care, 1<sup>st</sup> February for ICT and on 6<sup>th</sup> February for Sport.

### Getting the balance right

At this time of the year we would strongly encourage them to consider how to balance their revision with all other commitments, such as part-time jobs, clubs and activities. Students only get one chance to sit most of their GCSE examinations: it is important that revision is prioritised at this time. Of course, this must also be balanced with time to de-compress and relax as it is important therefore to have opportunities to focus on their health and fitness.

### Entry requirements

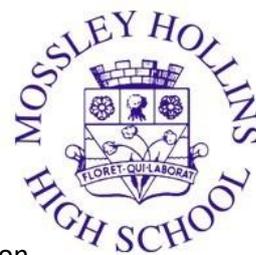
To ensure that they have the widest range of opportunities available to them when they leave Mossley Hollins, they must aim to secure the highest grades possible. Many courses at college require minimum grades of 5 or 6 across a number of subjects. Many of our students are perfectly capable of studying hard for and achieving Grades 7-9. Only maths and English GCSE resits are permitted at Post-16 College, but evidence shows that only 34% of students who resit maths successfully achieve a grade 4 or above, whilst only 43% of those who resit English achieve a grade 4 or above and this takes up another year of their lives, when something new could have been pursued, instead. Where students do not meet these thresholds they may have to study level-2 courses, *the same level as the GCSEs they are currently studying*. Students who do not achieve a good pass in English and maths will not be able to study A-level courses. Any course offered for those who do not achieve a good pass in English and maths will have a requirement for them to attend lessons in these subjects in order to re-sit the exams at college. This is time that other students will be able to use as they wish, for example to join clubs, meet up with friends or for independent study. It is wise, therefore, to study very hard now as it will save so much time later.

### Making the most of the time left

Actual GCSE examinations begin in just 13 weeks' time. We aim to issue the final revision booklet shortly after the February half-term. GCSE examinations take place over 7 weeks between 5<sup>th</sup> May and 21<sup>st</sup> June. The half-term break, including the Whitsun bank holiday, begins on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> May, with two other bank holidays during this half term on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> May and Monday 8<sup>th</sup> May. They are encouraged to make the very best of the time they have left in school and to follow a strict revision timetable at home and for part of each holiday. It is just a sensible investment of their time.

Headteacher: Andrea Din N.P.Q.H.  
Huddersfield Road, Mossley,  
Via Ashton-Under-Lyne, Tameside OL5 9DP  
T: (01457) 832491/833031  
E: admin@mossleyhollins.com  
W: www.mossleyhollins.com





## Additional opportunities to get support

We are currently working on plans for intervention at school during February half-term holiday as well as during the Easter holidays and the May half-term. Letters will be sent soon for those students being invited to the intervention sessions during February half-term. Some students may also be invited to breakfast and/or lunchtime revision. Staff are very keen to provide as much support as possible and I know you will be as grateful as I am that they are willing to do so.

## Time to relax and enjoy the summer

The final examination takes place on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> June for additional mathematics, although the vast majority of students will finish their examinations on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> June with Physics and Geography papers scheduled for this date. This means that students will have around 12 weeks before they will commence their chosen college courses. Revision therefore is not more work, it is just work done earlier to ensure that they have more choices available later in the year.

## How parents can help at home

It was great to see so many of you at the parent partnership evening in November. Feedback following the event was very positive with parents telling us they found the sessions really useful. You can help by testing your son/daughter using flashcards, class notes and/or knowledge organisers. Students in the past have told us that they really appreciate words of encouragement and support to ensure that they have a quiet interrupted space to revise.

In last week's Newsflash we shared details of the revision conference which students took part in and some of the revision techniques shared on the day, for example in Spaced Learning, Interleaving and Retrieval Practice.

**GCSE Pod:** Details of GCSE Pod have also been shared over a number of weeks. This is a fantastic resource for students to test and apply their knowledge across most subjects. In GCSE Pod students can create personal playlists to listen to in the run-up to an exam, to help with homework or on the go to help consolidate learning. The viewing history feature enables students to return to Pods they found useful. There's also a 'Favourites' playlist, which enables them to easily return to Pods on areas they may be finding difficult. Pre-made exam specific playlists, available in the 'My Courses' area are neatly organised, meaning students can manage revision quickly and easily whilst prioritising their time. Other apps which will help for specific subjects include Hegarty Maths, Corbett Maths, Maths Genie (all for maths/further maths and statistics), BBC Bitesize (various subjects), LanguageNut (Spanish) and KnowitAllNinja (ICT).

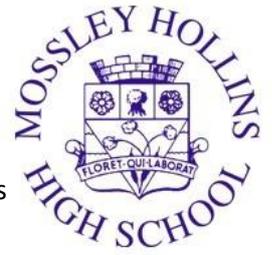
**School Website:** There is a dedicated year 11 revision page on our website which has a range of useful revision resources for the full range of subjects. Please keep visiting this page regularly as staff continue to add to this page.

If students are still struggling to plan their revision or to find the best way of revising for them, they should speak to their classroom teacher, form mentor, head of year or any member of the senior leadership team: we are all very keen to help.

Some students will not be working hard enough and others will be working very hard and may be very anxious. A little anxiety is often a motivator but too much anxiety tends to 'shut down the brain'. We know you will support them if they are experiencing the latter but please do not hesitate to contact Mr Beaumont

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(Head of Year - Progress) or Mrs Brennan (Assistant Safeguarding lead with responsibility for supporting the mental health of students), if you are very worried, so that school knows and can help.

It goes without saying that a steady, regular approach with regular feedback, lots of water, a good diet, good sleep and exercise built into the week (with some time away from revision) also helps a great deal.

Yours faithfully

**Mrs A Din**  
**Headteacher**  
**Mossley Hollins High School**

