



Our ref: ghu/wda

15th November 2016

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Re: Supporting your daughter with Science in Year 11

I am writing to update you on your daughter's science GCSEs. As you will be aware, your daughter is now in her final year of her GCSE education and the few remaining months are crucial to a successful outcome. At the end of this year, your daughter will sit her Science exams for Core and Additional (or just Additional if Core has been sat early). These exams will cover all the work from Year 10 and 11 for Biology, Chemistry and Physics. In total, this could be up to six hours of exams just for Science and so early and regular preparation is essential to secure success.

Please find below important information to aid in the organisation and preparation for the final assessments.

Summer exam dates

The Summer exam dates for Science are as follows:

Exam unit	Date	AM / PM
Biology Unit 1	16 th May	PM
Biology Unit 2	9 th June	AM
Biology Unit 3	19 th June	AM
Chemistry Unit 1	18 th May	AM
Chemistry Unit 2	14 th June	AM
Chemistry Unit 3	21 st June	AM
Physics Unit 1	24 th May	PM
Physics Unit 2	16 th June	AM
Physics Unit 3	23 rd June	AM

Overview of the Year 11 Science curriculum

In Science there are up to three separate GCSE's; Core, Additional and Further Additional. All students follow the Core and Additional GCSE. Each GCSE is entirely separate and so it is possible to have different grades in each. Each GCSE consists of Biology, Chemistry and Physics exam units with an additional Controlled Assessment unit. Each unit is worth twenty-five percent of the final GCSE.



PRINCIPAL: Tracy Dohel

GCSE	UNITS	HOW ASSESSED	% OF GCSE
Core Science	Biology 1	1hr exam	25%
	Chemistry 1	1hr exam	25%
	Physics 1	1hr exam	25%
	Controlled assessment 1	Internally assessed	25%
Additional Science	Biology 2	1hr exam	25%
	Chemistry 2	1hr exam	25%
	Physics 2	1hr exam	25%
	Controlled assessment 2	Internally assessed	25%
Further Additional Science	Biology 3	1hr exam	25%
	Chemistry 3	1hr exam	25%
	Physics 3	1hr exam	25%
	Controlled assessment 3	Internally assessed	25%

For each GCSE, students accrue points from each unit they have been assessed on. The total of these points is then calculated and converted into an overall GCSE grade. As such, students who may struggle with one aspect of Science can compensate with strength in another.

Controlled assessment

One vital aspect to student success is the controlled assessment. Students are able to have some limited assistance when writing up their controlled assessment and as such this can boost their overall grade significantly.

We will be working on finalising the controlled assessment marks in the latter half of this term immediately following the Year 11 mocks. Attendance to these sessions is crucial.

Year 11 November Mocks

All students will be aware that they have mock exams soon. Students have been issued with a timetable identifying when their exams are. For Science the exams are on the following dates:

Unit	Date	Class
B1	22 nd November	11w2; 11w3; 11h2; 11h3
C1	23 rd November	11w2; 11w3; 11h2; 11h3
P1	24 th November	11w2; 11w3; 11h2; 11h3
P2	29 th November	11w1; 11h1
C2	30 th November	11w1; 11h1

Students will have been informed which exams they are sitting. The class above is a generic overview.

Revision at home is essential for these exams and all students have been given revision guides (last year) for Core and Additional GCSE to assist with this. Once these mocks have been marked then further feedback will be given to the students on areas that they need to focus their revision.

Past papers and mark schemes for all exams can be found at the following website or through the VLE.

<http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-gcses/science-2011-mixed.coursematerials.html#filterQuery=category:Pearson-UK:Category%2FSpecification-and-sample-assessments>

Further support

In order to support your daughter with her GCSE Science, there are various interventions in place. Below are some of the strategies that are in place or that would greatly benefit students at home:

- 1) **Homework** is set weekly and currently focuses on reviewing the Core content from Year 10. It is vital that this is completed by the given deadline so that areas for intervention can be quickly identified and acted upon. Homework and the homework calendar are uploaded to “Showmyhomework” for students and parents to access. Further homework can be found on the VLE.
- 2) **Revision guides** for the Core and Additional Science are available if students no longer have their copy:

CORE GCSE	ISBN-13: 978-1-4469-0261-5
ADDITIONAL GCSE	ISBN-13: 978-1-4469-0265-3

Please ensure that you purchase the correct exam board and specification as there are several books available for other courses that will not necessarily contain the correct information.

- 3) The **VLE** has numerous resources available for students to access. This includes:
 - a. Specification details including expectations of the course and assessments
 - b. Revision trackers allow students to identify areas they need to focus on
 - c. Past papers of both Higher and Foundation tier for practicing exam-style questions
 - d. Mark schemes for students and parents to self-assess
 - e. Examiners reports for to identify national trends and areas for focus
 - f. Further reading for accessing additional support materials from external sources
- 4) **Tuesday after-school intervention** is held every week for Science GCSE. The sessions focus on specific sections of the content that students have found challenging in the past. They are held at the Upper School in Labs 1 and 2 from 15:30 to 16:30. A register will be taken to monitor attendance.

These sessions are open to all students with some being targeted as the topic / unit has been identified as a significant area for improvement.

- 5) **Key terms** are extremely important when writing exam answers and so copies of the glossaries from the main textbook that we use are available on the VLE. Students would do well in reviewing and recalling these as well as their meanings.

- 6) **Extended questions** will appear in each exam that your daughter sits. Each paper includes two such questions, each worth six marks (20% of each paper!). This can make up to two grades difference! Students practice these in class but further practice at home is even better. Previous national results show that typically students do not access these questions and so if your daughter does answer these then she dramatically increases her chance of success.

- 7) **Timed questions** are of key importance as students are apt to run out of time in the exam even if they know answers to questions. Roughly one mark is equal to one minute of time and so spending time keeping to this allowance boosts student's achievement. Encouragement of this when working at home also helps.

If you have any further questions or would like any further assistance then please do not hesitate to contact me through the usual channels at Ark Helenswood.

I hope you can support us with this intervention.

Many thanks.

Yours faithfully

Graeme Hunter
Head of Science and Computing
Ark Helenswood