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Dear Parent/Carer

Exam Preparation 2019

The SQA exam diet begins on Thursday 25 April this year and the last day of classes for all pupils will be Wednesday 24 April. The exams begin a full week earlier this year so the last days will be crucial and staff will be providing coursework, revision and exam preparation right up to the end of that day. We expect pupils to avoid any disruption to the school day as this could affect their chances and those of others. We would ordinarily allow pupils with the Thursday exams (H Physical Education 09.00-11.30 and Admin and IT - N5 13.00-15.00 and Higher 13.00-14.30) to take the previous day as study however we do not feel there is the time available for this as both subjects have classes on the Wednesday that can provide revision input.

As we head into the final few weeks before the exams it is crucial that young people fine tune their revision so that it prepares them for what they will experience on the actual day. In effect they need to stress proof themselves so that they perform at their best. In assemblies we have likened this to preparing for the driving test where the instructor will ensure the learner has practiced repeatedly on the test circuit so that they are faced with familiar situations and scenario's. Key points of advice to help with this stress proofing from former pupils and staff are:

- Practice for what the particular exam will be like so:
 - Practice reading questions and highlighting key words
 - Do timed practice questions
 - Practice whole papers
 - Mimic the exam so no music, phone or other interruptions
- Have a revision plan and stick to it. Application now will benefit them for years to come
- Commit significant time to revision and practice, this is particularly key during study leave when the day can slip away
- Take advice from teachers and ask them to mark any exam practice completed
- Get support from parents and friends if pupils need help arranging and sticking to a revision plan.

There are a host of resources available to young people varying from the official SQA website with Past papers and marking schemes to websites like the BBC Bitesize one. A particular personal favourite is Rigour Maths which can be accessed at <https://www.cdmasterworks.co.uk/the-daily-rigour/> I like it because they regularly release a Maths exam question at National 4, 5 and Higher and it is accompanied by a worked YouTube answer. Working through these is ideal as preparation and can be a great habit.

Once exam leave begins pupils will still be able to come into school and work if they prefer this option rather than home. They can also consult staff at the times when they would ordinarily be timetabled for that class.

As previously mentioned, there are some general resources available to support revision on our website:

- Revision Class list <http://portlethenacademy.aberdeenshire.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/2018-19-Revision.pdf>
- Raising Attainment Booklet <http://portlethenacademy.aberdeenshire.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Raising-Attainment-in-the-Senior-Phase-Booklet.pdf>
- Study Skills Booklet <http://portlethenacademy.aberdeenshire.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Study-Skills-Booklet.pdf>

I hope that the above is helpful as we get close to the exams and thank you for the support at this key time.

Yours sincerely



Neil Morrison
Head Teacher