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Dear Parent/Carer,

Our Year 11 students have entered a crucial phase in their school life, and I would like to alert you to some developments that will affect your child during this period.

Guiding and supporting students in preparing for their exams is a high priority for us; all year 11 have had a progress dialogue and had the opportunity to discuss the areas of study that they need to prioritise and how to plan these sessions. A good 'rule of thumb' for this stage of the year is that students should be completing 10-15 hours of study outside of lessons per week, and this study should be high quality and focused on revision and preparation that addresses the individual student's areas of greatest need. Your child will need your encouragement, your help and your guidance in order to be well prepared and success focused.

Students may need to be reminded of the following key points about study and it would be very useful if these could be reinforced at home as well as in school:

- **Variety** – don't focus on one subject for too long as you can start to feel stuck (20-30 mins on one topic/subject per study session is probably about right);
- **Breaks** – build breaks for relaxation and snacking into your plan. These help to keep your mind fresh;
- **Chunking** – make sure you spread your hours into small chunks throughout the week. Trying to do 8 hours on a Sunday does not work for most students! A revision session at school will count as one hour or study though as staff will chunk these;
- **Rewards** – build small rewards (e.g. chat time) into the plan, but make sure that these can be 'claimed' only once something has been done well;
- **No distractions** – there is scientific evidence to suggest that our brains lose capacity for memorising and processing if we have certain types of stimulus around us. TV is particularly bad. We all work best if we are able to find a place to focus on our work and remember that exams will be in silence!
- **Active revision** – research shows that we retain very little information if we simply read something. We need to do something with the information in order for it to 'stick' and for us to be able to apply it well. Creating mind maps or flow diagrams using your notes or books can be very helpful, as can answering questions that focus on the materials learned - past papers work well for this.

With six school weeks to go until Year 11 students sit their first GCSE it is important that we remind them of a few key things. All of them had access to an off-site revision day in November. These sessions focused on study skills and revision techniques and the students should have used these in their mocks. They should now begin to use the techniques they found most useful. Revision sessions are already underway in several subject areas and a full list of exam preparation sessions for all subjects has been published in a supplement to the earlier revision guide. Being in school will have the most impact on success, while no-one can help being ill, it is important that when able to be year 11 are in class. The course content of most subjects is coming to an end and revision will then take over the lessons too.

In order to encourage positive engagement with the preparation for the summer exams, Mr Harris has put into place a series of incentives and I hope your child is engaged in collecting these rewards.

Our intention has been that all of our Year 11 students are able to achieve a healthy and happy balance between working and relaxing. They have received lots of information about the importance of self-care and looking after themselves and I hope they have spoken to you about this over the last few months. I and everyone at Farlingaye wants our year 11 to enter the exam period knowing they have engaged and to end the year feeling proud of themselves and their achievements. Together we can support them to look forward and to make the most of the opportunities available.

Please do contact Mr Harris or myself at Farlingaye if you have any questions about the exam preparation process, or about the rewards and sanctions noted above.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Catherine Laird', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Mrs Catherine Laird
Assistant Headteacher