



Tuesday 25th February 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

As the first signs of spring begin to appear—longer days, blossoming trees, and the promise of warmer weather—it's a reminder that a season of growth and new beginnings is upon us. For our Year 11 students, this is especially true, as they enter their final weeks of preparation before their GCSE examinations. Just as nature flourishes with the right conditions, our students can thrive with the right preparation, guidance, and determination.

To support you and your child during this important period, I have attached a full list of the GCSE exams, complete with dates and times. Your child will receive a personalised version of this in the coming weeks, but I wanted to share this overview to aid in planning and preparation for when the exams begin. Before these exams are the practical exams in 3D Design, Art, Food Preparation & Nutrition and drama, and these dates will be made known to students as soon as possible.

Alongside the serious business of exams, we want to take a moment to celebrate the hard work and dedication of our students. That's why we're hosting a **Pizza and Quiz Night on Thursday 27th March**—an evening of fun, food, and friendly competition based on English, maths, science, history and geography! There will even be additional prizes available to any team who can beat the teachers! As a reminder, you will need to secure a spot for your child in advance, so please use this link to let us know your child will be attending: <https://forms.office.com/e/wxBeCC1AES>. Sign ups will close one week before the event, on Thursday 20th March.

We are also reminding students of our **100-day challenges** in English, Maths, and Science, designed to build confidence and consolidate learning in the lead-up to exams. These resources were given as hard-copies to students, but are also available on our website, here: [Year 11 Revision and Exams - Iceni Academy - Secondary](#). Additionally, our **Success Evening videos** remain available for those who would like a refresher on effective revision strategies: [Team 25 - Iceni Academy - Secondary](#).

To further support independent study, we encourage students to make the most of proven revision techniques, including:

- **Mind maps** – By visually organising information, students create connections between ideas, which strengthens encoding. They can start with a central topic and branch out with subtopics, using colours and images to reinforce memory. Regularly reviewing these maps aids retrieval.
- **Memory palaces** – This ancient technique works by associating information with familiar locations. Students can picture their home and place key facts in different rooms, mentally 'walking' through the house to retrieve information when needed. This method strengthens deep storage and makes recall more intuitive.
- **The Leitner Method** – A highly effective system for using flashcards, where cards are placed in different boxes depending on how well the student remembers them. Cards they struggle with are reviewed more frequently, reinforcing weaker areas and improving long-term retention. This method takes advantage of spaced repetition, which is essential for strong memory recall.

Both GCSEPod and Seneca Learning support the scientific principles around learning and memory, and we know from experience that students who engage fully with both platforms perform exceptionally well in their GCSEs compared to their starting points.

With the right mindset and support, our students can step into their exams feeling confident and prepared. Thank you for your continued encouragement and partnership in their success. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours faithfully,

A. Staniforth.

Miss A Staniforth
Vice Principal

