



Preston Lodge

High School

21 March 2018

Dear Parent/Carer

Exam Leave 2018

I am writing to the families of all S4, 5 and 6 students to explain our school's approach to examination leave. As many of you will know, changes in qualifications, and the greater incidence of two-year courses across the country, has necessitated a rethink of examination leave. Each school now has their own model to best support young people between 30 April and 1 June.

Attached with this letter is a form for all S4-5 students to finalise their individual programme. **Please return this form to our school office by 28 March.**

For S6 students the situation is straightforward – their last day in school is 27 April, and, after that point, they simply come to school for examinations. There is therefore no need to complete the attached form. For S4 and S5 students we must carefully balance the learning needs of those continuing with two-year courses, with the need for students sitting examinations to have appropriate revision opportunities.

Our approach to examination leave can be summarised as two simple rules:

1. Where a student has an examination this summer then they are entitled to be out of school for the day of that examination and for one day before that.
2. Where a student is studying a course that continues without examination (two-year Higher or National 5 courses) they should attend classes at all points during the examination period, other than on designated days out of school.

Attached with this letter is a form for all S4-5 students to finalise their individual programme. **Please return this form to our school office by 28 March.** How will examination leave look for individual S4 and S5 students? An easy way to think about this is to imagine three different students:

- **A student whose courses all have examinations this year** will, following our rules, start examination leave on 2 May and finish examination leave on 2 June. They have no courses continuing.
- **A student whose courses are all two-year courses** will remain in class for the duration of the examination period. This is, of course, because they have no examinations to sit!
- **A student who has a mixture of courses continuing and examinations** will experience a college-like approach to the examination period. They will be out of school for the day of an examination, and

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the day before, but they will be in class on all other days for those subjects that are continuing next year.

We are confident our approach to examination leave allows learning to continue in school for areas of a student's curriculum where that is required, whilst properly supporting students in the run up to examinations. Overleaf, I have provided answers for some frequently asked questions, but if you are in any way uncertain about how this approach affects your child please do contact your child's Head of House or Guidance Teacher.

Finally, this year we are running in-class pre-exam sessions once again. Each student will be entitled to at least one in-school pre-exam session for each subject, and these will take place at a point where a subject has a double period in the existing timetable. Shortly, we will distribute to students a recording sheet which will allow them to identify, through conversations with their teachers, when their own sessions will be running.

There will be some variations here – subjects, for example, whose exam starts in the first week of exam leave will not necessarily be able to run a session - but in most cases, for most subjects, students will be able to spend structured time with a specialist teacher prior to an exam. Existing informal opportunities for students to spend time with teachers will, of course, carry on. Do look out for the recording sheet your child will receive shortly and do have a chat with them about it.

Yours sincerely,

Gavin Clark
Headteacher

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Frequently Asked Questions

1. What about S6 students?

This model means that all S6 students will begin examination leave in the same way as in previous years on 27 April. This is because all of their courses are, by necessity, one-year courses with examination.

2. What about students sitting National 5 examinations as part of a two year Higher course?

Students in a small number of our two-year Higher courses will be sitting National 5 examinations en route to a Higher qualification next year. In those cases students will remain in class other than for the day of the National 5 examination, and the day before because, following rule 2, their course is continuing.

3. How do National 4 courses fit into this approach?

Students sitting National 4 subjects, which do not have examinations, are likely to have formally finished their qualification by Friday 27 April. We will establish an individualised programme for all students whose timetable is currently made up of entirely, or mostly, National 4 qualifications to ensure that they have a positive learning experience between 30 April and 1 June. In some cases some students will spend part of that programme completing National 4 courses that they have been unable to finish.

4. What if my child has an examination on a Monday?

If a student has an examination on a Monday they are entitled to have the Friday before that examination out of school as one of their designated study days. This is an individual choice.

5. What if my child has consecutive exams on, say, Monday and Tuesday?

In this case, the student is entitled to two study days in advance of these two examinations, so may choose to designate the Thursday and Friday before these examinations as days out of school.

6. Can a student elect to work on two-year continuing courses at home, rather than in school?

No. We expect all students to attend all continuing classes other than on designated days off.

7. Will S4-6 students register between 30 April and 1 June?

No. As in previous years, S4-6 students who enter the building over this period will not be registered, in line with our college-style approach to examination leave. However, students will be registered in continuing course lessons they are expected to attend.

8. How will S4-6 students in continuing courses get in and out of school?

School transport will still be available for S4-6 students, and each young person attending continuing course lessons will have to make a choice as to whether they come into school for the whole day, and use our study spaces for revision when they do not have a class, or whether they would prefer to simply be in class at the points in the day when they are expected to attend.

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