YEAR 11 PARENT & STUDENT GUIDE

2026-27

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Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to this Year 11 guide—a resource designed to support you through one of the most important and exciting years in your school journey. Inside, you'll find practical advice on revision, study skills, wellbeing, and how families can work together to help students thrive.

We know GCSEs can feel overwhelming at times, but you're not alone. Whether it's planning revision, managing stress, or navigating next steps, we're here to help. Our team is committed to supporting every student to achieve their best—and to making sure parents feel informed and empowered along the way.

If you have any questions, concerns, or just need a bit of guidance, please don't hesitate to get in touch. We'll always do our best to help and solve any problems that arise.

Key Contacts

- **Miss Wallis** – Head of Year 11
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- **Miss Youell** – Year 11 Student Support Officer
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We look forward to working with you throughout the year. Let's make it a successful, memorable, and empowering journey together.

Warm wishes,

The Year 11 Team

Parent Guide to GCSE – What It Offers

www.parentguidetogcse.com/

Parent Guide to GCSE is a dedicated platform designed to help parents support their children through the GCSE journey. It's packed with practical tools, expert advice, and reassuring guidance—especially for those who feel out of their depth with modern exams.

🔑 Key Features

- **Support for Parents**
  The site acknowledges how tough it can be to help teens revise when parents haven't sat exams in decades. It offers clear, jargon-free advice to help parents feel confident and informed.

- **Mindset & Skillset Focus**
  Their approach goes beyond academics—helping students develop the mindset and study skills needed for GCSEs, A-levels, and life beyond school.

- **Free Webinars**
  Regular webinars for parents and students offer expert guidance on revision, wellbeing, and exam preparation. These sessions are interactive and practical, and Emily—one of the founders—is a key speaker known for her relatable, insightful advice.

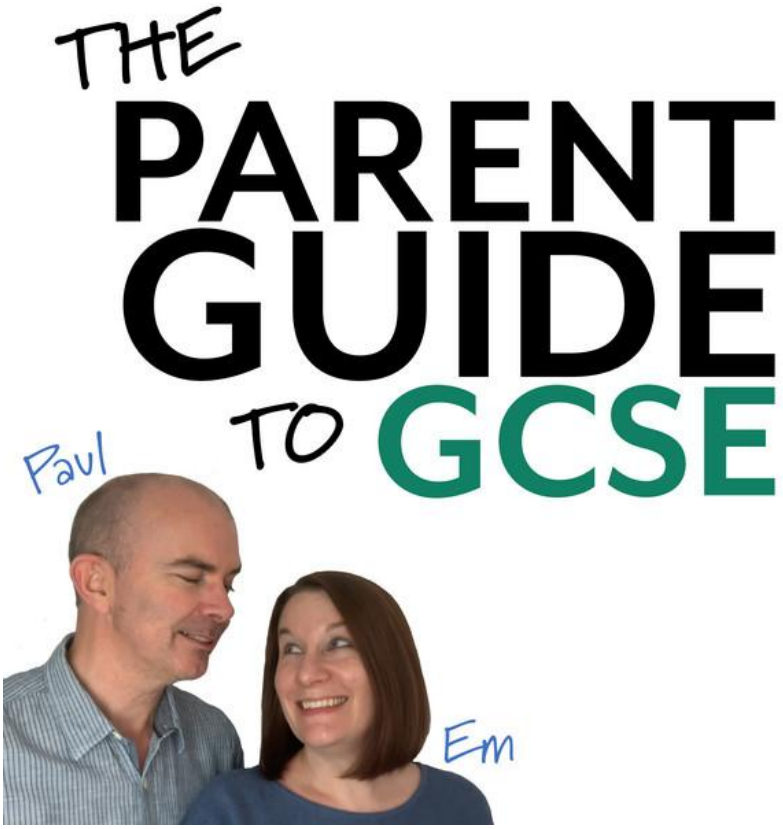
- **GCSE Toolkit**
  A structured membership programme that gives families access to revision strategies, planning tools, and expert tips. It's designed to replace guesswork with clarity.

- **Revision Cheat Sheets**
  Curated links and tips for each subject, saving parents and students hours of searching for reliable resources.

- **Free Revision Plan Generator**
  A brilliant tool that creates a printable, year-long revision plan in under 10 minutes—ideal for families who want to get organised fast.

- **Blog & Podcast**
  Regular blog posts and podcast episodes cover everything from mental health and SEND support to finding tutors and managing ADHD. These are great for bite-sized learning and reassurance.

- **Contact & Community**
  Parents are invited to join the #ParentsWhoKnow community—a supportive network that shares tips, encouragement, and real-life experiences.



Top 10 Tips for Parents supporting their children

🎯 1. Help Them Nail the Revision Timetable

Teenagers often struggle with procrastination and overwhelm, especially when faced with multiple subjects and looming deadlines. Sitting down together to build a realistic revision timetable can make a huge difference. Break days into manageable blocks, prioritise subjects, and include regular breaks. Research shows short, focused sessions—like the Pomodoro technique's 25-minute bursts—are more effective than long, unsustainable stretches. Use tools like Pearson Revise's planner to structure time and include non-revision activities. Planning when to stop is just as important as planning when to start—it helps avoid burnout and keeps momentum going.

🗂️ 2. Get Organised Early

GCSE students juggle content from up to ten subjects, which means a mountain of notes, textbooks, and resources. Helping your child organise their materials by subject at the start of revision can reduce stress and improve focus. Create a system—folders, colour coding, or shelves—that makes it easy to find what they need. This avoids the trap of "tidying as procrastination" and sets the stage for productive study. Your involvement here isn't about doing it for them—it's about modelling structure and showing that preparation is part of success.

🥣 3. Be a Breakfast and Water Monitor

Nutrition and hydration have a direct impact on brain function. A UK study found that students who regularly eat breakfast perform significantly better—up to two grades higher—than those who skip it. Encourage foods that release energy slowly, like oats, eggs, and whole grains. These support concentration and stamina during revision and exams. Water is equally vital: even mild dehydration can impair memory and processing speed. Keep a water bottle on their desk and aim for 6–8 glasses a day. These small daily habits build a foundation for sharper thinking and better performance.

🧠 4. Ditch the Highlighters—Quiz Instead

Highlighting and re-reading notes might feel productive, but they're passive techniques that don't build exam-ready recall. Encourage your child to use active revision strategies like quizzes, flashcards, and knowledge checks. These challenge the brain and reveal gaps in understanding. It might feel harder at first—but that's a sign it's working. Quizzing via apps or printed cards gives instant feedback and builds confidence. Remind them that effective revision isn't about comfort—it's about stretching memory and practising retrieval. The goal is to make mistakes now, not in the exam hall.

🪟 5. Create a Study-Friendly Space

Environment matters. Research from Harvard University shows students perform better when they study in a consistent, dedicated space—especially one with natural light.

Daylight improves learning rates in maths and reading by over 20%. Help your child find a quiet, well-lit corner free from distractions. This might mean rearranging furniture or repurposing part of a room. The key is consistency: a space that signals "this is where I focus." It doesn't need to be fancy—just functional, comfortable, and theirs. A good study space builds routine and helps them get into the zone.

📄 6. Pass the Past Papers

Past papers are one of the most powerful revision tools available. Encourage your child to complete them under timed conditions and mark their work honestly. This builds exam stamina and helps them understand how marks are awarded. Over time, they'll spot patterns in question types and common pitfalls. Mark schemes and examiner reports offer valuable insights into what examiners are looking for. Pearson's website has a rich archive of past papers across subjects. Regular practice with these materials helps students move from revision to exam readiness with confidence.

🕵️‍♂️ 7. Use Examiner Reports Wisely

Examiner reports are a hidden gem in revision guides. These summaries highlight the most common mistakes students make and explain how marks are gained or lost. They're based on feedback from hundreds of examiners and offer targeted advice for each topic. Encourage your child to read these reports alongside their revision—especially for subjects they find tricky. Pearson Revise eBooks include these insights in their summary pages, and they're available for free on a trial basis. Using examiner reports helps students revise smarter, not harder, and avoid repeating common errors.

🃏 8. Flashcards That Actually Work

Flashcards are a classic revision tool—but only when used correctly. Encourage your child to write a keyword or question on one side and a concise answer or explanation on the other. Colour, doodles, and capital letters can boost memory retention. The act of creating flashcards from memory is itself a powerful learning exercise. Once made, they're perfect for quick-fire revision and self-testing. Pre-made sets can be useful, but homemade cards deepen understanding. Flashcards are portable, flexible, and ideal for short revision bursts—whether at home or on the go.

📝 9. Try 'Blurting' for Active Recall

'Blurting' is a fun and effective technique that involves writing down everything your child knows about a topic from memory—then filling in the gaps using notes or textbooks. It activates working memory and highlights areas that need more attention. Blurting works brilliantly in small groups too, where students can compare answers and learn from each other. It's interactive, low-tech, and surprisingly motivating. Encourage your child to use it regularly, especially for subjects with lots of content. It's a great way to track progress and build confidence over time.

🧘 10. Keep Calm and Carry On Supporting

GCSEs can be stressful, and teens need emotional support as much as academic help. Be their cheerleader—celebrate effort, not just results. Avoid threats or ultimatums, which can increase anxiety. Instead, create space for honest conversations about worries and wellbeing. Encourage balance: hobbies, exercise, and time with friends are essential, not optional. Remind them that exams don't define them, and that you're proud of their resilience. Your calm, consistent presence helps buffer them against pressure. On results day, they'll remember not just what they achieved—but how supported they felt.

🔟 Top 10 Student Tips for Surviving Year 11

⏰ Time Management

Create a weekly schedule that includes school, homework, revision, and downtime. Prioritise tasks based on deadlines and importance, and break big assignments into smaller, manageable chunks. Use planners, apps, or wall calendars to stay organised. Avoid distractions like phones or TV during study time—set boundaries and stick to them. The more structured your time, the less stressed you'll feel.

🗣️ Talk to People

If you're feeling overwhelmed, confused, or anxious, don’t keep it to yourself. Talk to someone—whether it’s a teacher, a friend, a parent, or a trusted adult like Miss Wallis, Miss Youell, Mr Edenbrow or your Form Tutor. Chances are that others are feeling the same way. Sharing your thoughts can help you gain perspective, find solutions, and feel supported. You're never alone, and asking for help is a sign of strength, not weakness.

💪 Work Hard In and Out of School

Success in Year 11 comes from consistent effort both in the classroom and at home. Stay focused during lessons and take notes that will help later. At home, set aside regular time for revision and homework. Surround yourself with motivated people and remind yourself of your goals—whether it's college, an apprenticeship, or a dream career. Break tasks into smaller steps and celebrate progress along the way.

📅 Attend Every Day

Every single lesson matters. Being present and punctual helps you stay on top of your learning and reduces the stress of catching up. Even missing one day can mean falling behind in key topics. Build good habits now—showing up every day shows commitment and builds resilience. Plus, teachers notice and appreciate consistent attendance.

Avoid Drama

Year 11 is about focusing on your future. Avoid arguments, gossip, and distractions that drain your energy. Spend time with people who support you and help you stay on track. Drama might feel important now, but it rarely helps you succeed.

Learn from Last Year

Reflect on what worked and what didn't last year. Be honest—did you procrastinate or struggle with certain subjects? Use those lessons to improve. Change your habits, ask for help, and build on your strengths. Growth comes from reflection and action.

Listen to Others

Listening means understanding, not just hearing. Take advice from teachers, mentors, and friends seriously. Ask questions when unsure and be open to feedback. It helps you learn better, build stronger relationships, and avoid confusion. This skill will help you well beyond Year 11.

Sleep Well

Sleep is essential. Aim for 7–9 hours a night to help your brain work at its best. Stick to a routine and avoid screens before bed. Good sleep boosts memory, focus, and mood, making school less stressful and more manageable.

Eat Breakfast

A healthy breakfast fuels your brain and body. Skipping it can lead to tiredness and poor focus. Choose foods like whole grains, fruit, and protein. Starting your day right helps you stay sharp and ready to learn.

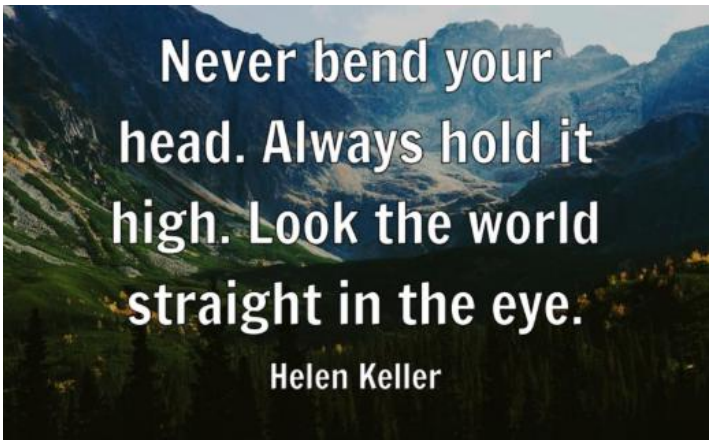
Exercise Regularly

Physical activity isn't just good for your body—it's great for your mind. Exercise releases endorphins that reduce stress and boost your mood. Even short walks, stretching, or joining a sports club can make a big difference. Regular movement improves focus, sleep, and even exam performance. Make time for it—it's an investment in your wellbeing.

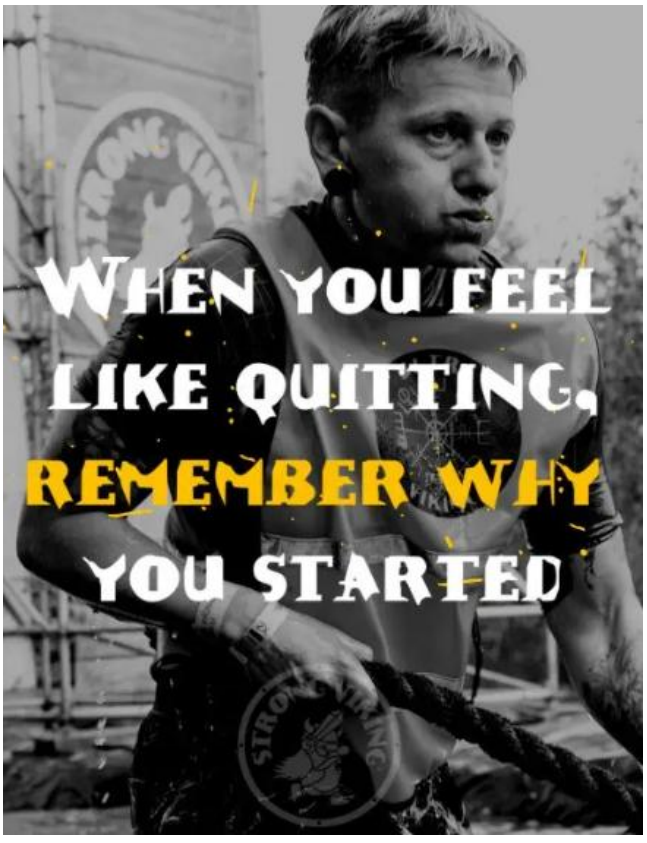
“There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work and learning from failure.”

COLIN POWELL

TODAY



you can handle whatever life throws at you.



For Students: “Good vs. Bad Revision: What Really Sticks”

🧠 Good vs. Bad Revision: What Really Sticks

Not all revision is equal. Some methods actively strengthen memory and understanding—others just feel productive but don’t lead to long-term retention. Here’s how to tell the difference:

✅ Good Revision: What Actually Works

🔁 Active Recall

This is the gold standard. Instead of reading notes passively, students should test themselves by trying to recall information from memory. Techniques like blurting (writing everything they know about a topic), answering flashcard questions, or completing low-stakes quizzes force the brain to retrieve knowledge—making it stick more effectively.

🗓️ Spaced Repetition

Revisiting topics at regular intervals helps move information from short-term to long-term memory. Rather than cramming, students should plan to review subjects multiple times over weeks. Apps like Anki or revision planners from Pearson Revise can help structure this approach.

🔀 Interleaving

Mixing up different subjects or topics in a single study session improves problem-solving and adaptability. For example, revising maths, then switching to science, then back to maths helps the brain make connections and avoid tunnel vision.

📝 Past Paper Practice

Doing timed exam questions builds familiarity with format, pacing, and mark schemes. It also helps students apply what they’ve learned in realistic conditions. Reviewing answers against examiner reports shows where marks are gained and lost.

🗣️ Teaching Others

Explaining a topic to someone else—whether a parent, peer, or even a pet—forces students to organise their thoughts and identify gaps. If they can teach it clearly, they truly understand it.

❌ Bad Revision: What Doesn't Stick

📖 Re-reading Notes

It feels familiar, but it's passive. Students often mistake recognition for understanding. Without testing themselves, they won't know what they've actually remembered.

🖍️ Over-Highlighting

Highlighting can be useful—but only if it's selective and followed by active techniques. Colouring every line doesn't help with recall and can become a distraction.

📚 Copying Out Textbooks

Writing out chunks of text might look neat, but it rarely leads to deeper understanding. It's time-consuming and doesn't challenge memory.

⏰ Last-Minute Cramming

Cramming the night before an exam increases stress and reduces retention. The brain needs time and repetition to consolidate learning.

📱 Multitasking While Revising

Music with lyrics, phone notifications, or background distractions reduce focus. Revision should be a focused, distraction-free zone to be effective.

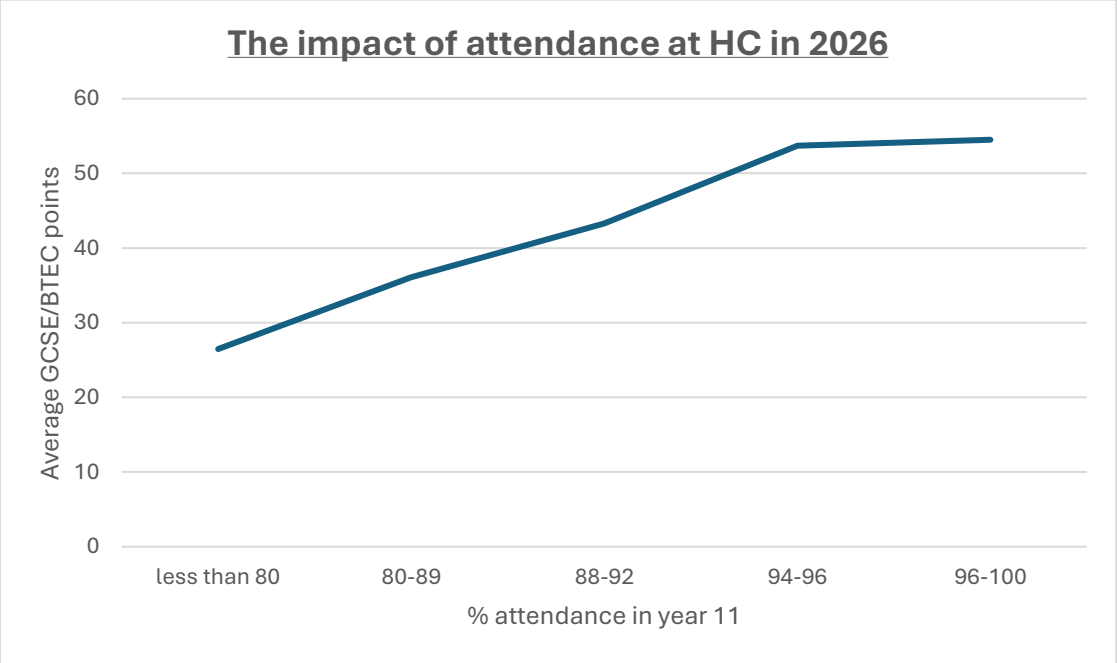
💡 Final Thought

Good revision should feel challenging. If it's too easy, it's probably not working. Struggling to recall something is part of the process—it means your brain is building stronger connections. Lean into the discomfort, and the results will follow.

Attendance and Punctuality: A Key Ingredient for GCSE Success

We completely understand that illness and individual circumstances can affect attendance—life happens, and wellbeing comes first. But where possible, we strongly encourage parents to support their child in attending school consistently and arriving on time. The evidence is clear: at our school, students with high attendance last year achieved significantly better GCSE results. Every lesson missed means lost learning, missed feedback, and reduced confidence. Punctuality also builds routine and focus—essential habits for exam success. The chart below shows this direct correlation with the Year 11 cohort who got their GCSE exam results in August 2026.

Your support in helping your child be present, prepared, and engaged each day makes a real difference to their outcomes. Together, we can give them the best chance to succeed.



What this year's Year 12 and 13 said about Year 11:

- "Using video resources followed by practice questions is a really good way to understand difficult concepts in a variety of subjects."
- "For me, I found that working with no distractions worked best."
- "I had dedicated time slots to do my work, such as straight from school until when I finished."
- "I primarily used videos and took notes at each step to solidify what I'd learnt in school."
- "For my sciences and maths I used Cognito. He goes through the vast majority of the course and explains it in a way that's very easy to understand."
- "Once I studied and revised the whole course I moved on to past papers and I recommend doing as many as possible."
- "I would get your teacher to mark essay-based subjects and do the others yourself—be as harsh with the mark scheme as possible."
- "PMT (Physics & Maths Tutor), I would heavily recommend their predicted papers as I found the questions/topics were at least 50% accurate."
- "For English Literature, I recommend finding high-level model answers and trying to understand the thought process behind them for multiple layers."
- "This becomes easier if you actually understand the topics when you revise rather than just copying them down."
- "The study skills I used the most during my GCSEs included notes, flashcards, and lots of past paper questions."
- "My advice would be to relax and don't stress out."
- "Imagine you're collecting your results paper and thinking you could have done better 'if I tried'. Thinking like this helped to motivate me to work hard"
- "Imagine you're collecting your results paper and thinking you could have done better 'if I tried'."
- "The advice I would give to my past self is to keep organised, as it would allow me to easily find my notes and work completed in class."
- "Imagine you're collecting your results paper and thinking you could have done better 'if I tried'."

🎓 Thinking Ahead: Hampton Sixth Form and Post-16 Options

We're proud to offer a vibrant, supportive and highly successful Sixth Form—and we'd love to welcome as many of our Year 11 students as possible to continue their journey with us. Hampton Sixth Form provides a familiar environment, expert teaching, and a strong foundation for university, apprenticeships, or employment. If you're considering staying on, we strongly encourage you to apply. We offer a very wide range of academic and applied qualifications across the Trust, many of which weren't available at GCSE.

That said, we know Sixth Form isn't the right fit for everyone. Across the city, there are exciting alternatives including college courses, apprenticeships, T-Levels, and vocational programmes. Whatever path you choose, we're here to help you explore your options and make informed decisions.

Important reminder:
Under current government legislation, all young people in England must remain in *some form of education or training until their 18th birthday*. This could be full-time study, an apprenticeship, or part-time education alongside work or volunteering.

🗓️ Sixth Form Open Evening

Date: Wednesday 4th November
Time & details: 5.30pm, a letter with further details will be sent in due course.

Whether you're certain about your next steps or still weighing up options, we look forward to seeing you at the Open Evening. It's a great chance to meet staff, explore courses, and ask questions about life in Sixth Form.

September 2026	🎒 Welcome back: reset, refocus, and rise
Thursday September 17th	🗺️ Curriculum Evening: mapping your mission
September 2026	👩‍🏫 Academic Mentoring: quiet conversations, big impact
Monday October 12th	🏆 Flash Rewards Week: recognition in real time
Wednesday October 14th	📊 Report Card Drop: your progress, on paper
Tuesday October 20th	👥 Meet the Tutor Evening: connecting the dots
Monday October 26th	🌴 Half-term break: breathe, balance, bounce back
Wednesday November 4th	🏫 Sixth Form Open Evening: glimpse the next chapter
November 2026	📝 PPEs: practice under pressure, progress with purpose
Tuesday December 1st	🎨 Art PPEs: creativity meets challenge
Monday December 7th	🏆 Flash Rewards Week: consistency counts
Tuesday December 8th	🗓️ PPE Results Day: where & why did you drop marks?
Wednesday December 9th	📊 Report Card: second look, deeper insight
Thursday December 10th	👨‍👩‍👧 Parents Evening: your support squad, in sync
Friday December 18th	🎄 End of Term: festive mode activated
Monday January 4th	🚀 First Day Back: fresh term, fresh targets
Friday January 15th	🎼 Music students' composition day: from silence to symphony
Monday February 1st	🏆 Flash Rewards Week: keep the fire burning
Monday February 15th	🌴 Half-term break: pause, prep, push forward
Tuesday February 23rd	🔥 Motivation Evening: fuel for the final stretch
Friday March 5th	💼 Careers Fair: explore paths, shape futures
Monday March 22nd	🎭 Drama Exams: lights, camera, action
Monday March 23rd	📚 Core PPEs: the big three—Maths, English, Science
Thursday March 25th	🎓 End of Term: Easter on the horizon
Easter Holidays	📖 Easter Revision Sessions: smart moves, quiet gains
Monday April 12th	🚀 First Day Back: final phase begins
Friday April 16th	🌍 Culture Day: celebrate stories, share perspectives
Monday April 26th	🎨 Art Exams: final brushstrokes, lasting impressions
Tuesday May 4th	🎓 Other GCSE Exams Begin: the real deal
Monday May 31st	🌴 Half-term break: one last breather; utilise the time
Friday June 18th (date might change)	🎉 Leavers' Day: memories, milestones, momentum
Monday 21st & 22nd June	🧭 Sixth Form Induction: confidence grows
Thursday July 2nd	💃 Prom Night: celebrate the journey, dress to impress
Mid-July/August	🌞 Summer Break: rest well, plan smart
Thursday 19th August	🗓️ Results Day: your moment—be ready, be proud. Please avoid booking holidays over this date if possible!
September 2026	🎒 Welcome back for Sixth Form? Re-set, refocus, and rise