Tomlinscote School

3rd November 2026

Dear Parents/Carers

RE: Update to Year 11 Study Leave Arrangements

As we continue to support our Year 11 students through their GCSE examinations, I would like to inform you of an important change to our arrangements for study leave this year.

In previous years, students have moved onto study leave once the GCSE examination period had begun. Following careful consideration of the needs of our current cohort and growing evidence regarding the benefits of structured support during the examination season, we have taken the decision for students to remain in school full time until the May half-term break.

I appreciate that this represents a departure from previous practice, and I would therefore like to explain the reasoning behind this decision.

The GCSE examination period extends over several weeks, with many subjects having examinations both before and after the May half-term holiday. During this time, students continue to benefit enormously from regular attendance in school. Remaining in school allows them to access specialist teaching, targeted revision sessions, subject-specific intervention and immediate support from their teachers in the days leading up to each examination.

Importantly, maintaining a normal school routine helps students remain focused and organised at a time when anxiety levels can be high. Whilst some students thrive when revising independently at home, many benefit from the structure, accountability and guidance that the school day provides. By remaining in school, students have dedicated time to revise effectively, ask questions, address misconceptions and receive reassurance from staff who know them well.

We are also mindful that students have differing levels of support and study facilities available at home. Keeping students in school helps ensure that all young people have equal access to high-quality resources, expert teaching and a purposeful learning environment during this crucial period.

There are significant pastoral benefits too. The examination season can be challenging for many students, and being in school means they continue to have access to tutors, pastoral staff and trusted adults who can support their wellbeing. It also enables us to maintain regular contact with students and quickly address any concerns that may arise.

Additionally, there are some subjects where there is no exam until late in the exam window. This means that there is a significant amount of time where that subject teacher will not have any direct contact with their students. This revised approach reduces this amount of time that a teacher may miss seeing their class.

Most importantly, we believe that every additional lesson, revision session and conversation with a teacher has the potential to make a real difference. Experience tells us that the final weeks before examinations can have a significant impact on outcomes, particularly for students who are working towards important grade boundaries.

During this period, students will follow a modified timetable that prioritises examination preparation, revision and intervention. Our intention is not simply to keep students in school, but to ensure that the time they spend with us is purposeful, supportive and focused on helping them achieve their very best.

After May half term, students need only come into school for their exam. However, the school provides supervised study space for the students.

I would like to thank you for your continued support. We believe that this revised approach will help our students approach their examinations with confidence and leave us having achieved outcomes of which they can be truly proud.

Should you have any questions regarding these arrangements, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Matthew Venton
Principal