



15 January 2026

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing to inform you that your child is about to undertake their GCSE Art exam. It is important that we inform parents of the nature of this exam as it is very different from any other GCSE exam and therefore has different requirements and demands on the young people that undertake it. This exam is worth 40% of the total GCSE and will begin on Monday 20th January. The exam will finish with the 2 day 'sustained focus' period starting on the 27th April. The exam will be completely finished by 30th April for all students.

In Art, the exam is over 11 school weeks. During this time, the students must produce a sketchbook in which they explore other artists, develop and record their ideas and experiment to help them design a final piece. It is this final piece that they will create during the 2 days of sustained focus in late April/early May. The exam is essentially another project, just like the ones that they have produced previously for their coursework, but with less time to complete it in.

The work produced over the next 11 weeks in their sketchbook will contribute towards the majority of their marks for this exam. The sketchbook itself is worth 75% of the exam, and the final piece, the other 25%. It is therefore vital that students complete all of the work set during the next 10 weeks to ensure that their sketchbook is finished by the deadline in late April. If students do not manage these small deadlines throughout the exam well, it is likely that they will feel overwhelmed by the end of the exam where it will seem that they have a large volume of work to complete all at once.

As there is no written exam in art, there is the expectation from the exam board that the students create a body of work over a period of time (the sketchbook). This is why the workload in art may seem disproportionate to other subjects, as it replaces the difficulty of a written, memory-based exam. The art department have carefully planned the workload so that if each small deadline throughout the exam is met, the students should not feel unnecessarily stressed at the end, and it should not become unmanageable. The final piece 'sustained focus' exam days represent the end of the exam project and is therefore the final deadline for the project. Therefore, April is likely to be a pressure point for students in the course where they work hard to improve their submission before it is handed in. Any students that have slipped behind on any work set during the project are likely to find this time particularly stressful, but we are here to support them if required. Ideally, this situation will not occur for most students. If your child manages to meet the deadlines, they should not feel any unnecessary stress towards the end of the exam period.

Due to the workload element also, the exam boards recognise that it would be challenging for students to manage this and revision for their other subjects at the same time. For this reason, the art exam finishes weeks before the written exams take place allowing students to prepare for their other exams in good time, after the end of the art GCSE. **I can confirm that after 30th April, art students should not be required to produce any more work for Art, outside of their lessons, other than to exhibit their work.**

If completing work is challenging for students or if they would benefit from using some of our materials or expertise, we offer an afterschool Art session in the art classrooms on a **Wednesday from 3pm-4.15pm**



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and Thursday from 3pm-4.30pm, other evenings can also be negotiated where required. Students can also attend Homework club in the Library to work on their exam project.

Finally, if there is anything that we can do to support your child or if you have any questions about the course, please do not hesitate to contact us via email. We find that regular communication with Parents often helps students to overcome any difficulties and supports them to make excellent progress.

Yours Sincerely

Mrs Anna Harvey

DIRECTOR OF ART AND DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY