

Dear Parent, Guardian & Student,

I wanted to contact all parents and students of all year groups to make everyone aware of the new changes in the GCSE Science curriculum.

As you may be aware the GCSE examinations have recently changed in their structure, content and the system of grading.

At the end of year 11 Separate Science students will now sit two 1hour 45minute examinations for each Science discipline; Biology, Chemistry & Physics. Meanwhile, Combined Science students will sit two 1hour 15minute examinations for each Science discipline.

Due to the increase in content and difficulty in the new GCSE Science specification students now start the course at the beginning of year 9. During year 9 all students will follow the Combined Science pathway in their 3 lessons per week. However, at the beginning of year 10, students in sets 1 and 2 will begin following the Separate Science pathway (6 lessons per week) whereas those in sets 3-6 will continue to follow the Combined Science pathway (5 lessons per week).

In order to help you and your child best prepare for the examinations I wanted to let you know how we will assess students in Science this year.

Students in Science will no longer have end of topic tests. Instead these have been replaced by written assessments at designated points during the year. Each year group in Science will sit an examination in their Science lessons at 3 or 4 points during the year with every student in that year group sitting the same exam. Each exam will test every topic they have studied to date meaning that subsequent assessments will increase in rigour due to the number of topics having been covered at that point. The rationale behind this is that in year 7 & 8 it will give our younger students the opportunity to become better practised at reviewing prior knowledge as well as current. It also allows students in years 9,10 and 11 to continuously review the GCSE content previously studied, keeping past concepts fresh. In addition, we hope all students will begin to understand the importance that if concepts are understood and learnt for the first assessment, their study for future assessments becomes significantly easier, students become better at linking ideas together and thus will be better prepared for the new linear GCSE examinations.

Year 9 will have combined Biology, Chemistry and Physics assessments during the following weeks which will cover topics from that year only.

Science teachers will be able to specifically tell students which topic areas to cover where 'part 1' is stated prior to the assessments.

To assist with preparation, students can access the online textbook by logging into Kerboodle and clicking on the 'Oxford GCSE' textbook.

Parents will be informed of students' performance in each assessment when who school data is sent home periodically.

ASSESSMENT POINT 1 – WEEK 5 <sup>th</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup> November	
<b>AP1 topics:</b>	Bioenergetics (Photosynthesis); Atomic structure (4.1.1) ONLY
ASSESSMENT POINT 2 – WEEK 21 <sup>st</sup> – 25 <sup>th</sup> January	
<b>AP2 topics:</b>	Bioenergetics (Photosynthesis); Cell Biology; Atomic structure & PT (part 1) (Chem); Chemical analysis; Atomic structure (part 1) (Phys)
ASSESSMENT POINT 3 – WEEK 25 <sup>th</sup> – 29 <sup>th</sup> March	
<b>AP3 topics:</b>	Bioenergetics (Photosynthesis); Cell Biology; Bioenergetics (Respiration); Atomic structure & PT (part 1) (Chem); Chemical analysis; Chemistry of the atmosphere; Atomic structure (part 1) (Phys)
ASSESSMENT POINT 4 (End of year exam – Hall) – WEEK 1 <sup>st</sup> – 5 <sup>th</sup> July	
<b>AP4 topics:</b>	Bioenergetics (Photosynthesis); Cell Biology; Bioenergetics (Respiration); Atomic structure & PT (part 1) (Chem); Chemical analysis; Chemistry of the atmosphere; Atomic structure (part 1) (Phys); Forces & motion; Waves (part 1)