



## POWER Meeting Minutes: Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> of May 2018 – Exam Stress

- **Huge well done and thank you to the POWER Reps who are representing their tutor groups.**
- **Wednesday's council event was focused on exams. This allowed students to talk about ideas and concerns that they had about exams that they had taken, about to take and the lead up to them.**
- **There is a suggestion box at reception so if any students have further suggestions please put them in the box.**
- **There is also a notice board on the main stairs by reception and this will be monitored and updated by our notice board reps.**
- **POWER REPS: please ensure you discuss this with your tutor groups and send any further ideas/suggestions to Miss Slinger or Miss Whittington.**
- **POWER reps were joined by Mrs Meloy, the exams officer for Carshalton Boys, who accompanied Mr Avery in answering questions. Mrs Meloy is in charge of all the internal exams in school as well as the public exams. An inspector from the overall examining board can turn up without warning during the school year and ask to see her to ensure that she is doing everything correctly – this includes making sure that secure items are locked up and the desks are the correct distance apart. If any part is not correct, our school cannot run exams as an exam centre. Many thanks to Mrs Meloy for giving up her time during exam season and helping us get our qualifications.**

Below is a list of questions, which were collated from tutor groups' suggestions/feedback. These were all discussed during the POWER meeting.

**1. *Can the temperature of the sports hall be controlled? It fluctuates and can sometimes be uncomfortable to work or concentrate in.***

The sports hall is a very large area and is primarily used for sports and so it cannot be too hot. You will notice that the sports hall starts cold but once you have many bodies in the hall, it heats up. What we recommend is that if the sports hall is too cold, students wear their jumpers and blazers and once it starts to warm up they remove these. It is a very difficult area to control.

**2. *The exams that were timetabled for period 5 sometimes ran over the time we finish school – can this be changed?***

The exams run for the duration that they are set for. We have a large number of exams to do in a short period of time. The heads of department are asked for how long they need for exams and then these are fit together to create an exam timetable. It is getting you used to your exams, GCSEs and A Levels in which you could have 3 hour long exams that start in the afternoon. Sometimes, students do a number of exams in one day. By finishing after period 5, you are saying that it runs into period 6, which will be part of your timetable in year 11. I do try to schedule the shorter exams for the afternoon sessions.

**3. *We often get stressed during speaking exams in languages which take place during end of year exams.***

For Year 11, you will have speaking exams in Spanish and French. These need to be practiced throughout the year. We also run a mock speaking exam in which it is carried out exactly the same as the public exams. You will be recorded as this helps to build confidence while you are having the conversation with the teacher. It also allows you to go back over your notes and change things that you are not happy with to help improve your mark. You are prepared for these exams before and therefore there should not be anything to worry about unless you have not done any preparation for it before the exam.

**4. *There seems to be a difference with the exams that are carried out in class and the ones that we do at the end of the year. Can these follow the same procedures to be made more similar?***

There is not enough time for teachers to follow the same procedures as the public exams. In the public exam, your phone is taken from you and you are informed of where to sit. This cannot be done within an hour as well as do the exam. We try to run the exams that take place in the sports hall (for year 7 – 10) as close to your public exams as possible to give you practice so by the time you get to your real exams, you know what is expected of you.

**5. *Can we go to the toilet during exams?***

Going to the toilet during the exams could allow a student to cheat, it could distract others, and it wastes valuable time. There is also a staff ratio put in place in that room which needs to be maintained at all times (60 students = 2 members of staff). A member of staff needs to accompany you to the toilet, which means that if one student leaves, the ratio is also lost. As students, you need to take responsibility and ensure you go to the toilet before the exams. If you have a toilet pass, we are aware of this and we are allowed to take you out.

**6. *There is too much time given in exams, which means that after checking the exam we just end up sitting there.***

Exams are designed by subject specialists, in which time has been considered. If a question is 6 marks, we are wanting you to think about 6 separate points that will get you marks. Thinking time has been factored into this. If you rush, you will miss things. Students that use the time and re read the question do well. The time isn't just for you reading your answers again but also to re-read the questions.

**7. *Can the school make a question bank, in which we can practice past paper questions?***

There is already one.

1. <https://www.carshaltonboys.org/>
2. Click 'Curriculum'
3. Click 'Examination Information' (<https://www.carshaltonboys.org/page/?title=Examination+Information&pid=119>). On this page is all the information you need to know for your exams in which you can find past exam papers for BTEC, GCSE and A-Level.

On this note, it is important to bring up plagiarism for coursework. When you do a piece of coursework you sign a declaration form that you sign to say the work is your own.

**8. *Can teachers make more detailed revision lists for topics, as some subjects state use this website but haven't given any further information.***

Absolutely. We are going to have a meeting soon that discusses revision for year groups so this will be raised. We are also changing the way we write reports so it includes this as well. We will make sure we will do this for all year groups.

**9. For revision, can we use one platform like google drive or show my homework?**

All homework should be shared with you on show my homework however, information can be put on google drive but it must be highlighted that this has been done on show my homework. I will speak to staff to pass on this message. We will be speaking to Heads of Departments to make sure that homework is clearer.

**10. There are different expectations from different subjects. Why is this? Can they not be made equal?**

The expectations in all subjects is that you do your best and you achieve the best possible personal outcome. The other expectation is that you do your best. We as staff will push you in order to achieve this and make the best possible progress. We will give you every opportunity to help you move onto the next stages.

**11. During the Easter holiday, we had a high number of hours work for maths, science and English which left little time for studying for our other subjects.**

We will consider this. A meeting will be taking place to discuss the curriculum, assessment etc. moving forward in September. We have changed the year 9 and 10 exams so they sit them slightly earlier in the year, which allows them to see where they need to revise before going onto their next year. The year 11s had this and got a lot of information of what they have to learn and remember which helped them moving forward to their summer public exams.

**12. Can we be taught how to revise effectively?**

At parent's information evening, revision tips were explained to parents of year 7 – 11. This may need to be gone through again with you. This may need to be done during PHSCE. The year 9 are given strategies as well. For year 7 and 8, we will make sure that revision techniques are given to you before you do your exams.

**13. Due to rotations, some students had an unfair advantage for exams as they did the subject twice before the exam.**

You go through topics once and then are tested on them. After you have finished topics you then go onto revision. In terms of the science exams, all students were given a test on the first rotation only and did not cover these topics again and therefore did not have an unfair advantage. Maths, English and Science are on a three year plan which means that there is little time to go over any topics again.

**14. The A3 recall sheets in English and science need to be changed as there is too much information that is expected of us to learn to do every couple of days.**

This is the information that you need to know. This is what you should be doing outside of schools. You need to remember that you are competing on a world market. Students that get university place and get good money at jobs are all doing this. The school's job is to provide quality teaching and a space to learn. You have access to all the information you need on the screens. This is not going to change. We as a school are not going to apologise for a lot of information to learn. The whole point of revision is to do little and often and that is why you are tested every couple of days. We are getting you ready for the world of work as five hours a day at school is nothing compared to how many hours you will be working when you leave.

