

Dear Parent/Carer

GCSE Exam Board

I am writing to inform you that the Science Department has taken the decision to switch GCSE exam boards, for Year 9 and 10 students, from OCR to AQA after Easter. This decision has been made as we feel it provides the best opportunity for your daughter to achieve to her best ability in her science GCSEs. AQA is the largest exam board for Science at GCSE, with more students following the AQA specification than the other exam boards combined. We believe this will provide a number of benefits for your daughter:

1. A greater range of resources available from PiXL and colleagues in other schools. This gives teachers access to more resources to use during lessons and more resources available for revision.
2. Greater consistency in assessments and grade boundaries. As the largest exam board AQA will receive feedback on assessments for the new specification from a larger number of schools. We also believe that this will lead to greater consistency in grade boundaries as fluctuations are less likely, this allows us to prepare your daughter for exams with increased confidence.
3. Closer link with Key Stage 3 (KS3 – Years 7 & 8). At KS3 we follow the Activate programme of study, which is an AQA course. By continuing with AQA into KS4 it will allow a more linked approach with the KS3 experience that your daughter had.

I would like to assure you that switching from OCR to AQA does not mean that the content your daughter has studied so far in the course is not relevant. The vast majority of the content is exactly the same for both OCR and AQA with the main difference being the order the content is covered and in which exam the content will appear. We will make sure that it is clear to your daughter where the content she has covered to date fits into her exams at the end of Year 11.

I am aware that you might have purchased corresponding course textbooks for the OCR course. As I previously mentioned the content between the two courses is largely the same and these books can still be used by your daughter for her revision. We will look to provide a clear guide as to how to use the book in conjunction with the AQA course. During the summer term we will also provide students with the opportunity to purchase revision guides for AQA course at a discounted price.

I hope that I have made it clear the reasoning for switching exam boards at this stage and have re-assured you that it does not impact the content that has been covered by your daughter to date. I will provide you with more updates in the Summer Term regarding revision guides and where the content covered fits into exams at the end of Year 11.

If you have any concerns or questions please feel free to contact me on the email address provided below.

Mr C Bond
Director of Science
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