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Ambition • Service • Kindness

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Dear Year 11 Parents and Carers

GCSE Science Year 11 – Class of 2026

As the students are now well and truly into their final year of study this is a courtesy letter to ensure you are informed of key information about the upcoming Science GCSEs for Year 11. It is useful for you to have this information to hand so you can discuss it with your child if you need to, and it will hopefully help you to support them and their Science work through to the end of the year.

The exam board and the course codes

All Science GCSEs taken at Beaminster school are written by the “AQA” exam board.

Separate Science students (triple award) are doing the courses: **Biology** (course code 8461), **Chemistry** (course code 8462) and **Physics** (course code 8463).

Combined Science students (double award) are doing “**Combined Science trilogy**” (course code 8464).

The GCSE exam structure

All Year 11 students will sit 6 Science papers this summer. The **provisional** exam dates are below, exam dates are not yet fully finalised and may change due to unforeseen circumstances. Students will be provided with a full exam timetable closer to the date.

Biology Paper 1	12th May 2026 PM
Chemistry Paper 1	18th May 2026 AM
Physics Paper 1	2nd June 2026 AM

Bioogy Paper 2	8th June 2026 AM
Chemistry Paper 2	12th June 2026 AM
Physics Paper 2	15th June 2026 AM

Content of the exams

The Paper 1 content for all three Sciences is covered in class during Year 10. Paper 2 content for all three Sciences is the content now being covered in Year 11. We aim to finish all content by around Easter of Year 11.

Trial exams

There are two sets of trial exams in Year 11. These will be taken during November and March.

The **November trial exams** will be **Paper 1 content** for all three Sciences.

The **March trial exams** will be **Paper 2 content** for all three Sciences.

Coursework

There is no mandatory coursework for the Science GCSE. However, students have been completing required practical activities (RPAs) in class. On each exam paper there will be specific questions relating to these RPAs so it is important that students know which RPAs are on each exam paper and have revised them all properly.

Revision sources

Students have a variety of revision aids and resources at their fingertips, some of the most commonly used are shown below.

1. **CGP revision guides.** These contain all the key content required for the exams. They are a great place to review the topics and find some general practice questions. All students should have a copy of the relevant revision guide/guides from Year 10. Please ask your child to come and see me if they do not have one for some reason.
2. **Revision checklists.** Students are provided with revision checklists in class and via ClassCharts. These provide a detailed breakdown of what to revise for each exam and are issued for the trial exams and the real exams.
3. **Student exercise books.** We try hard to ensure students keep clear and well documented notes throughout Year 10 and 11 so they can use them to as a revision source for the exams.
4. **GCSE Bitesize.** A great free website which helps students break down the work covered into small, manageable chunks of revision.
5. **Seneca learning.** Students often like to use Seneca as a learning tool to review topics.
6. **YouTube.** A great source for revision when used correctly, but students need to ensure they are using it appropriately. We recommend:
 - a. **Free Science Lessons.** Very clear, concise and correct!
 - b. **Cognito learning.** A more graphical yet still very informative channel for helping with Science.

Practice exam paper questions and self assessment

There are some great sources of practice questions and plenty of companies offering excellent resources to purchase, however, this is not a necessity. These are some sources we find students commonly use:

1. **Grade gorilla.** A GCSE quiz website which the Science department pays for students to have access to. It has numerous self marking quick quizzes which offer immediate feedback on how students are doing. This is good for checking underlying knowledge.
2. **Practice/past exam papers.** Practice exam papers can be found online, however, in order to make it easy for students to find the correct ones we have uploaded past papers onto the school's Science Sharepoint. The papers are in easy to access PDF format so should open on any device and the mark schemes are shared with the papers.
3. **Revisionscience.com** Another useful website which has all the past papers available to download, lots of general revision information and revision quizzes. This is a free website so has quite a lot of adverts which can be annoying.
4. The students' own **trial exam papers.** By the time they are preparing for the final exams students will have done three rounds of trial exams and will have the papers they sat. It is always useful for students to review these papers, along with any in class mini-tests students have kept.

We fully understand that this year can be very stressful for students and our aim is to support them as much as possible.

It is very clear that those who approach the year with a sensible can-do attitude and get stuck into their studies properly come out on top. We want to help all students get the best out of themselves, so hopefully passing some of this key information on can help you understand the sort of things your child can be doing, and help ensure they are well prepared for their assessments this summer.

If you have any queries regarding the Science GCSE, or anything else I have raised in this letter, please do not hesitate to get in touch: Jcrossland@beaminster.dorset.sch.uk

Kind regards

Mr J Crossland
Head of Science