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Dear Parents and Carers,

Year 11 Leaving Arrangements and Celebration Plans

I have been asked by a number of supportive Year 11 parents and carers about when Year 11 will be finishing school. I can confirm that Year 11 will officially leave us on **Friday, 12th June**. Although they may have one or two more exams the following week, we feel it is in the best interest of all students to remain in school where specialist support can be given to enable them to perform to the best of their ability to the very end. At Houlton, this decision to maintain attendance until the majority of exams are completed is a strategic one, designed to provide every student with the best possible chance of success.

Once a student has completed all the scheduled examination papers for a specific subject, they are still required to attend those lessons on their timetable until the official leaving date. During these sessions, the classroom will transition into a supervised "Private Revision" space. This ensures that every hour spent in school remains purposeful, allowing students to utilise the expertise of their teachers to focus on their remaining subjects. By staying in these structured environments, students benefit from a quiet, academic atmosphere that is free from the distractions of home, while still having access to the school's resources and pastoral support. This ensures we maintain a consistent routine and high expectations for all pupils until the very end of their GCSE journey.

I would like to offer some clarity on why we believe "every lesson counts" during this final stretch:

- **Access to Specialist Expertise:** While home revision works for some, it cannot replace the immediate, "point-of-need" support provided by a specialist teacher. In school, students have access to subject experts who can clarify misconceptions in real-time—which is vital in high-stakes GCSE subjects.
- **Targeted and Supervised Revision:** Our staff are currently pivoting lessons to focus entirely on exam technique, past paper analysis, and high-impact topics. This directed environment ensures that revision time is high-quality and free from the digital distractions that often impact home study.
- **Data-Driven Decisions:** National educational research, including studies by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), consistently shows that "guided learning" and teacher-led interventions have a higher impact on grade outcomes than unsupervised independent study. Internal data across the sector suggests that students who remain in the structured school

environment during the exam period often perform up to a half-grade better per subject compared to those who go on early study leave.

- The "Balanced" Timetable: Maintaining a full timetable helps students keep a productive routine and cognitive variety, which actually prevents burnout in "core" subjects and keeps momentum high.

A Historic Final Day

As our first-ever cohort of students, we want to create a new Houlton tradition to celebrate their unique five-year journey together. We have planned a memorable send-off for this very special group of young people:

- Celebration & Memories: We will be arranging dedicated time for students to sign shirts and write in memory books. We will also have a photo backdrop available for students to capture final pictures with their friends and teachers.
- Commemorative Hoodies & Food: Students will receive their official School Leavers' Hoodies. This is a particularly exciting moment, as these hoodies mark their transition from Houlton students to our very first alumni. We will also be providing food for the year group to enjoy together.
- Formal Assembly: We will hold a formal leavers' assembly to reflect on their achievements and time with us before they depart.
- The Houlton Guard of Honour: To mark their final departure, we want the whole school involved. Students from Year 7 through to Year 10, along with all staff, will form a Guard of Honour as the cohort leaves our site.

An Invitation to Parents and Carers

We would warmly welcome all parents and carers to join us in this celebration. We invite you to be part of the Guard of Honour, continuing the line from the Reception area through to the road, cheering our students on as they exit the school gates for the final time.

We are incredibly proud of our Year 11s. They are working exceptionally hard during this demanding period, and their resilience is a credit to our school. We look forward to celebrating their hard work and five years of memories with you on the 12th June.

Yours sincerely



Mrs. L. Pountney
Head of School