

ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

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مدرسة القديسة مريم الكاثوليكية الثانوية

ص.ب. ٥٢٢٣٢، دبي - الإمارات العربية المتحدة

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OUR REF :

TRN : 10415399800000

DATE: Friday, 20th February 2026

To: Parents of Students in Years 1-13

PROPOSAL TO SHIFT FIRST TERM EXAMINATIONS TO BEFORE THE WINTER BREAK - We need your thoughts.

Dear Parents,

Greetings from St. Mary's.

We would like to address recent feedback from our school community regarding the academic calendar. Many parents and students have requested that the First Term Examinations be held prior to the Winter Break, rather than in January. We are grateful to those who have met with us to discuss the rationale behind our current structure.

In our commitment to student well-being and academic excellence, our Senior Leadership and Subject Heads have reviewed this request. We are now considering a formal shift in the calendar and invite you to share your perspective.

Understanding the Current Academic Cycle

Our school follows the UK Curriculum on a two-term system with three primary testing points. Please review the current structure below to understand how a shift would impact the academic year:

Term One (August – January)	Term Two (Late January – June)
Duration: ~16 teaching weeks + 2 exam weeks	Duration: ~16 teaching weeks + 2 exam weeks
School Assessments: Mid-Term Assessments & First Term Examinations	School Assessments: Mock Exams (Y11 & 13) & Final Examinations
Mandatory Benchmarking (KHDA): NGRT Cycles A & B, GL CAT-4, and IBT-Arabic	Mandatory Benchmarking (KHDA): NGRT Cycle C and GL PT Exams (English, Maths, Science)
External Exams: N/A	External Exams: GCSE/IGCSE & GCE/IAL (Pearson Edexcel)
Key Events: National Day, Saintz Festival, Investiture, Graduation, Winter Musical	Key Events: Sports Days, Ethnic Day, Model United Nations, Science Exhibition, Talent Show

Note: The timing for International Benchmark Tests (KHDA mandated) is strictly determined by external testing authorities and cannot be altered by the school.

Key Considerations for the Proposed Change

If we move the First Term Examinations to December (before the Winter Break), the following adjustments will occur:

Shift in Mid-Term Assessments: The mid-term assessment, typically held in October, would shift to February/March. These assessments cover a narrower range of content and traditionally help students secure stronger attainment and progress scores.

Reporting Schedule: Examination reports would be issued in late January or early February.

Years 11 and 13 (Board Years – Current Years 10 & 12): These students would receive a mid-term report based on assessments conducted in June/ August / September 2026. They will not participate in the February/March mid-terms as they will be preparing for or sitting their Mock Examinations.

Preparation: Exam portions would be shared in September 2026. This shift requires students to maintain a consistent daily study routine rather than relying on last-minute preparation.

Next Steps

We value your partnership in this decision. In addition to this parent consultation, we will be surveying students to gauge their feelings on the change.

Please complete the Google survey no later than February 25th 2026. Please find the survey link below .

Link:

<https://forms.gle/Rjbx9ajKtHKPfVK19>

Sincerely,



Mr. Paul Asir Joseph
(Principal)

