



Supporting Learning at GCSE

Dear Parent/ Carer,

At Riddlesdown Collegiate, we really value the significant support we, and our students, enjoy from parents and carers. Supporting students at home to compliment the work we do in school, makes a real and significant difference to students' outcomes. We are grateful for your support, and I am writing to provide you with some essential information and wider guidance as to what you can do to help.

Students are studying for a range of GCSEs graded on the 9-1 system. GCSE courses have a very limited coursework element, indeed most have none at all. As a result, final examinations at the end of Year 11 (and Y10 for RE) are of paramount importance. This can create significant stress and pressure for young people, and exacerbate any setback which student might otherwise have taken in their stride. We are here to help them in school, so if you have any concerns at all, please contact your child's Tutor. In order to help manage stress and ensure students do as well as possible, it is imperative, that they get into good habits regarding their learning early on and I would like to share a few important pointers with you:

- Students should, as always, make sure that their attendance is as close to 100% as possible and that their punctuality is outstanding. Every lesson missed is a lesson in which key learning, which could easily come up in an exam, is missed.
- It is helpful to focus students on what they aspire to do after their GCSEs. We strongly recommend that Riddlesdown College VI is the best place for the vast majority of our students, particularly those who aspire to take academic A-levels. Please do take a look at the College VI prospectus (which is available on the website) and discuss appropriate courses. In addition, it is worth considering any longer term goals.
- Students should make the most of their teachers. By being organised in their learning, students can ask relevant questions, providing the teacher with vital information about areas of strengths and areas for improvement for both individuals and groups of students.
- Please could you help to ensure that your child is organised with their Independent Study and that they are punctual in getting tasks completed by regularly checking "Google Classrooms". This can sometimes be a difficult task with teenagers, but cajoling, encouraging and reminding them of what they want to do next, all have an impact on motivation, even if it doesn't always feel like it!
- Students need to make sure that they are presenting their exercise books appropriately so that they are useful as a revision tool later. Revision guides are a fantastic resource, but it is a significant benefit to also have your own notes on subjects to revise from. Keeping books neat and ensuring that they have an up to date contents page are therefore essential in making information accessible and useful. This is also something that class teachers will insist on.
- Students should keep an eye out for extra help and revision sessions, in addition to opportunities to continue to develop their learning in extra-curricular settings.
- We encourage students to look through their books each day at home. This normally does not need to take more than 20 minutes to review an entire day (especially considering that not all lessons will be relevant, such as practical PE for example) but is a highly effective way of consolidating and embedding learning.
- Students should be aware of which exam board they are studying for each course. It is worthwhile spending a little time exploring the specification, past papers and examiners reports on the relevant



exam board website. This information is available in the “Exam Boards and Revision Guides” document.

- Revision guides can be used from the beginning of GCSE courses and can help students to develop a real ownership of their learning. They are particularly useful when accompanied by a relevant workbook. This enables students to use them alongside their classroom lessons to consolidate learning and review areas they are less certain about. A good revision guide is specific to an exam board and should therefore contain all essential information.

This is obviously a crucial time for students in their school careers, and successful outcomes are best achieved when students are healthy, happy and enjoying learning. With the right support and guidance both in school and at home, we are excited to help students develop ownership of their learning to ensure successful outcomes.

Yours sincerely

Thomas Beecham

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