



## Supporting Learning in Year 11; Exam boards and Revision Guides

Dear Parent/ Carer,

Students in Year 11 have now begun study towards their GCSE examinations and we have been very impressed with the start they have made. Supporting them at home, to compliment the work we do in school, always makes a significant difference to students' outcomes, but Year 11 students are doing a range of different course types. I am, therefore, writing to provide you with some essential information and wider guidance as to what you can do to help.

Year 11 are studying for a mixed set of GCSEs as the majority are graded on the new 9-1 system, but some still use the old A\*-G grades. While some subjects retain a coursework element this has been either significantly reduced or removed from many courses. As a result, there is increased emphasis on final examinations at the end of Year 11. It is imperative, therefore, that students get into good habits regarding their learning early on and I would like to share a few important pointers with you at this stage:

- 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 homework and that they are punctual in getting this done by regularly checking "Show My Homework". This can sometimes be a difficult task, but cajoling, encouraging and reminding teenagers of what they want to do next, do 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 are not yet available for many new subjects and 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.

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- Unfortunately, for many new courses, published revision guides are not yet available. Where they are available, they can be used from the beginning of GCSE courses and are particularly useful when accompanied by a relevant workbook as students can then 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 Year 11 students in their school careers and we have been impressed with the start that students have made in these courses. With the right support and guidance both in school and at home, we are excited to see what Year 11 students are capable of over the coming 18 months.

Yours sincerely

Thomas Beecham

Assistant Principal  
Head of Exam Centre