

**KING EDWARD VI
SCHOOL
LICHFIELD**



COPING WITH YEAR 10





Coping with Year 10

Welcome to Y10. This booklet is one of a series which we are producing to try to answer questions which we are often asked by parents as they try to guide and help their children through the various stages of school life.

We have tried to point out differences in approach which students might face as they start their GCSE courses and are beginning to look seriously at the next stage of their education after the age of 16. The ideas and strategies are also discussed with students in school so they should be familiar with at least some of them! You may like to discuss them at home and agree on areas where you can offer support.

As always, please remember that help is only really useful where it is wanted. It is very difficult for young people to admit that they need help. If this doesn't work well at first, be patient and try on another occasion.

By making it clear that you are ready to help in whatever way you can you are already helping. People usually ask for help when they are most ready to accept it.

Probably the most important help which you can give to any student is continued encouragement, praise and reassurance.

How to use Y10 well

- a. **Keep working.** There are few external exams in Y10 and this can lead to a temptation, after a lot of pressure in Y9, to 'coast along a bit' in Y10 with the intention of pulling out all the stops and making a real effort in Y11. This will not work! GCSE courses are taught over two years and there is in fact more teaching time in Y10 than in Y11. Also, in many subjects, work done in Y10 (for example course work and preparation for spoken topics in foreign languages) will be used for examination assessments in Y11. Students should 'hit the ground running'!
- b. **Start to think about the next step after GCSE.** There are a lot of opportunities given in the school's pastoral programme for students to explore what happens after the GCSE exams. They are able to explore different types of career and to start to consider appropriate school courses, college courses or employment with training to take as their next step. They need to look at these issues very carefully and have some preliminary ideas, not leaving everything until the Spring Term in Y11 when it suddenly becomes urgent and they will be under a lot of pressure as the exams get near.
- c. **Build up a Personal Achievement Profile.** Y10 is a good time to continue building up a Personal Achievement Profile. This can be done through extra-curricular activities which students do in school and activities which have no connection with school. Training providers, universities and employers want interesting people who have something to talk about and a hobby, a sport or a part-time job can show the sort of sense of commitment that people will be really interested in.

Within school students could include

- work experience reports.
- community service reports.
- recent contribution certificates.
- accounts of activities they have taken part in, eg plays.
- contributions to sporting activities.
- musical contributions/achievements.

Out of school students could include

- participation in sports, either team games or more individual sports like tennis, fishing or biking.
- participation in musical activities.
- involvement in drama productions.
- involvement in charity work.
- interesting hobbies or pastimes.
- Involvement in organisations like scouts, guides or the ATC.



Targets

- a. **Five terms to go.** The time scale from the beginning of Y10 to GCSE examinations is very short. There are really only five terms to get up to the required standard for the exam and some results will be achieved by coursework before that.
- b. **Only rest at holiday time.** Half terms generally consist of about 7 weeks and short breaks do come for a rest after each half term. It is essential that students work as hard as they can for the whole half term, not just for the first couple of weeks!
- a. **Grades.** Grades do matter and students should not just be aiming for the minimum which they need in order to get them where they want to go next. In the longer term, it might be very important to have the very best grades which students could possibly have achieved. Whatever they want to do after school, important judgements are made through these results.



Work

Do not be surprised if students tell you that the work has suddenly become much more difficult! Courses at Key Stage 4 can be very demanding and the requirements of examination boards mean that there is often a lot of ground to cover in quite a short time.

Time Management

- a. **Part-time jobs.** Students at this age are very money-conscious and never seem to have enough, so a part-time job can be really useful for them. It can also give them experience of budgeting and can show a sense of commitment which will be very valuable in later life. However, it is important that the part-time job should not become so time consuming that it starts to interfere with successful completion of school work, either because students have no time to complete the work or because they are too tired to work properly when in school. The same applies to **hobbies** and other out of school activities – they are also very important but school must remain the priority.

- b. **Homework.** A homework timetable will be issued as in previous years but the nature of homework can change quite a lot in Y10 and it is important that students understand this and manage it well. We often get complaints from students that they are being given too much to do and that they cannot keep up with the demands of teachers who are setting regular homework because there is too much course work to do. Often, on investigation, we find that the course work has been set over several homeworks but that the student, rather than completing it over several weeks as intended, has left it all until the last minute and this is what has caused the log-jam! Homework falls into three types and it is important to get a balance between them:

1. routine pieces of practice and/or consolidation work which are set with a fairly short deadline of a few days or for the next lesson. This is very similar to the pattern in Y7-9.
2. more extended pieces of work which might take two or three homeworks to complete. Obviously in this case the teacher is expecting the student to spend 40 minutes x 3 on the piece of work and it is not a good idea to leave it all until the night before it should be finished. The student should therefore complete part of the homework every night on which it is due to be done. When 40 minutes x 3 are needed to complete a piece of work it should be written in the home book on three occasions.
3. Sometimes work (particularly course work) is set with a very long deadline, which can be half a term or even more. In this case it is even more important to keep doing the work on the correct days, even if it is not set on that day. It should be written in the home book on all appropriate days and completed on schedule. In the case of this sort of homework, teachers will often give guidelines about which stage to complete by what date. Students should note these carefully.

c. **Home books.** These continue to be very valuable for organisation of time. Students should continue to use them to note homework tasks and vital deadlines.

d. **Holidays in term time.** These are likely to put any student at a disadvantage as important pieces of course work and/or preparation work will almost inevitably be missed.



Examinations

It is very important that students realise that, except in very exceptional circumstances, the school has a policy of always entering them for examinations in the courses which they start in Y10. It is not easy for students to change courses at a later stage as this shows a lack of commitment which we would not like to encourage. For this reason it is very important for students to aim for the best possible result in **every** subject.

