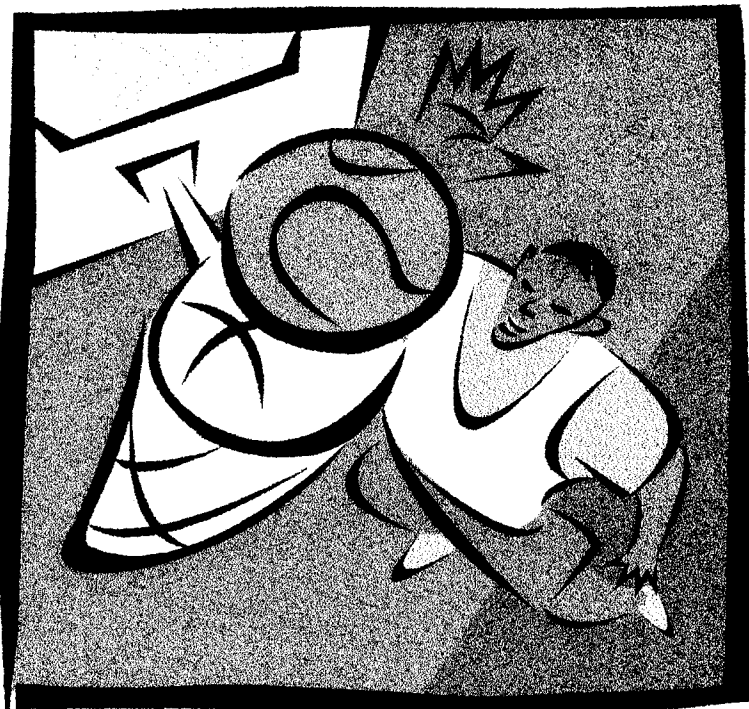


**KING EDWARD VI
SCHOOL
LICHFIELD**



***Coping with the
final preparations
for GCSE***



Coping with the final preparations for GCSE

Welcome to the final few months of Year 11. 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 suggest ideas and practical strategies for the organisation of course work and revision. These ideas are also offered as strategies to students in the school. Students will be familiar with at least some of them! You may like to discuss them with your son/daughter and agree on things which you can work on together to help deal with what can be a very anxious and stressful time.

As always, please remember that help is only really useful if 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 give support 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.

Contents

This booklet contains 2 sections:

1. Coping with course work.
 - **A.** General planning
 - **B.** Organising work and time
 - **C.** And in conclusion

2. And when it comes to revision

 - **A.** Planning the revision
 - **B.** Structuring the revision
 - **C.** Ways of revising
 - **D.** Revision notes

We hope that you will find this booklet and these ideas useful. We are, of course, always looking to improve our materials and would very much welcome comments on:

- items which you have found useful.
- items which you think are not helpful.
- issues which you think should be included but are not here.

Please send any comments to Mr A Walker at school – there is a form at the back of the booklet to assist with this.

Thank you.

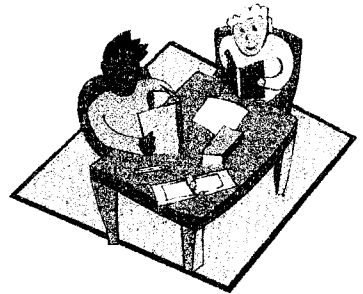


1. COPING WITH COURSE WORK

There are a number of things which you can do to help a student at home at what can be a very difficult time. Remember that home work will still be going on at the same time as course work and that some form of recreation is important too. Try to encourage students to keep a balance between these. Below are some suggestions which you might try:

A. GENERAL PLANNING

- ◆ Make sure that the student has an area of his or her own where they can safely keep pieces of homework to be used for revision or partially-completed course work.
- ◆ Nobody wants to be working all the time, but to get the balance right you could discuss guidelines for watching television, playing computer games, going out with friends and evening paid employment.
- ◆ Help them stay fit and healthy by having enough sleep and by keeping sensible hours. It is important to have some relaxation and recreation.
- ◆ The balance between study and leisure needs to be carefully thought out (and may vary a little depending on the stage in the year).



B. ORGANISING WORK AND TIME

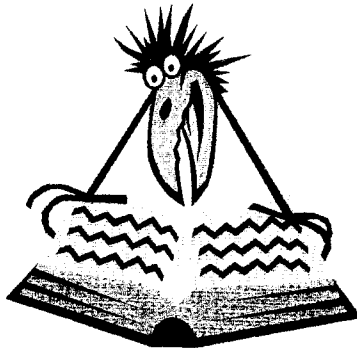
Encourage them:

- ◆ to keep up with homework/course work deadlines.
- ◆ to discuss progress being made in different subjects and check home books and course work diaries.
- ◆ not to leave everything until the last minute.
- ◆ to divide work into small, manageable sections, for example to plan in advance what they will achieve in the next half-hour or forty minutes.

- ◆ to plan a small reward when a goal is achieved.
- ◆ to be positive:
 - there is life after Y11 and they will get there!
 - when faced with the History homework, the Geography course work and the English reading all to be done soon, to say 'What do I need to start with?' rather than 'I can't cope with it all.'

G. AND IN CONCLUSION.....

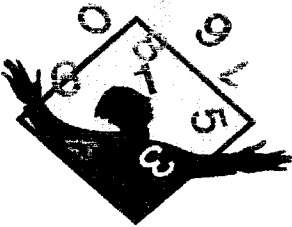
- ◆ Aim to encourage without pressurising – this can be very difficult!
- ◆ The key to doing well is to have an appropriate sense of urgency but without it becoming too stressful – a lot of stress is often self-imposed and is usually counter-productive.
- ◆ A student who says that he or she has 'nothing to do' may be trying to avoid doing all the things which need doing!
- ◆ There will be times when you become anxious about your son's/daughter's progress. Be aware that this will have an effect upon him/her. Try to use anxiety constructively and creatively to encourage action but prevent it from simply becoming another burden.



2. AND WHEN IT COMES TO REVISION.....

A. PLANNING THE REVISION

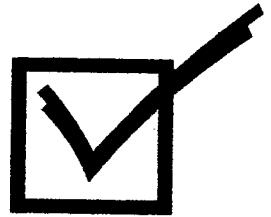
- ◆ When the examination timetable arrives, put a copy of it in a place where everyone can see it. It is not a secret document for students' eyes alone!
- ◆ By Easter the student should have created their own revision timetable, which should also be pinned up and used. It's easier to stick to the plan if everyone knows about it.
- ◆ Encourage students to mark progress through the plan so that they can see that progress through it is being made.
- ◆ Help the student find a comfortable place to work – a room with a desk or table and space for books and files is ideal.
- ◆ Trust them – don't find too many excuses to knock on the door to see if they're really revising or doing something else.
- ◆ Students work in different ways – some might prefer silence or some might find that music playing helps them to concentrate – be flexible and respect their wishes.



B. STRUCTURING THE REVISION

Sensible use of time will be particularly important after examination home release begins. Suddenly, there are some occasions when all day and evening become available and it is important to structure the time well. Revision takes a lot of time and needs to be started early. Much revision will need to be done during term, but once home release begins (and for at least some of the time during the Easter and Whitsun holidays) the equivalent of a normal working day should be spent on study. The following points may be helpful:

- ◆ short bursts of revision – up to fifty minutes – with small breaks are better for keeping learning fresh in the mind than long periods of concentrated study.
- ◆ encourage the use of the first few minutes of any sessions to recap. Without looking at any notes, the student should try answering the question ‘What did I learn last time?’
- ◆ encourage the student to plan a small reward when a set goal is achieved.
- ◆ remind them to study the meaning of words and phrases used in examination papers, such as ‘Explain’, ‘Comment upon’, ‘Discuss’, ‘Factorize’ and ‘Evaluate’. Encourage them to find out what specific questions are asking for.

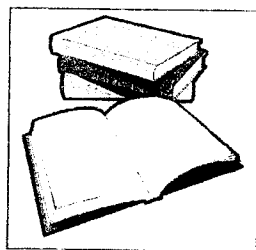


E. WAYS OF REVISING

There are different ways of revising. Revision should be active and remain challenging and stimulating. Some things to try are:

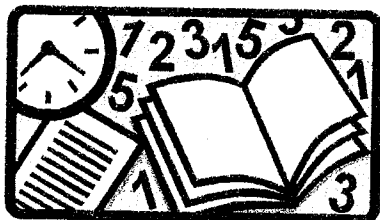
- ◆ summarise the topic using ten key words – talk about the topic afterwards only looking at the key words.
- ◆ the five things I will remember about this topic for ever are..... - these can be words or sentences – talk about the topic afterwards based on these.
- ◆ make ‘spider diagrams’ summarising the key points of a topic and the links between them.
- ◆ work with a pen or pencil in the hand and some rough paper or a note book to jot down new ideas at once.
- ◆ highlight key points/words with a highlighter pen.
- ◆ note key points on cards.
- ◆ re-visit topics – it’s much easier to remember things if you go over them more than once.

- ◆ the formula ‘Study it, cover it, summarise it and check it’ can be useful.
- ◆ talking is important, especially the student acting as a tutor and having to explain things to someone else – this makes for very effective learning. The ‘someone else’ could be you or it could be one of their friends – discussion/revision with a committed friend is another very effective learning method.
- ◆ help them with timed practice questions by acting as a stopwatch.



D. REVISION NOTES

- ◆ Teachers often provide revision notes and sometimes organise revision sessions for certain topics or practice sessions for exams – encourage the student to use these.
- ◆ Commercially produced revision guides can also be useful but please check that they are fully appropriate as many are written to try to satisfy the requirements of all exam boards and may contain a lot of irrelevant material.
- ◆ Be aware that there is a lot of good revision material available via the BBC’s ‘Bitesize’ revision programmes and the BBC website. Some of these are available in school. The website can be found at: www.bbc.co.uk/education/gcsebitesize.



Coping with final preparation for GCSE Feedback Sheet

Please send any comments you may have on the contents of this booklet to Mr A Walker at the school.

1. Items which you found useful.

2. Items which you think are not helpful.

3. Issues which you think should be included but are not here.

Signed: Parent/Carer

Name of student Tutor Group