

GCSE
INFORMATION EVENING

Structure of GCSEs

- Varies from subject to subject in terms of the percentage of controlled assessment and number of exams (e.g Technology = 60% controlled assessment, History = 25%)
- Most subjects only have one tier of entry but a few still have two - Foundation Tier and Higher Tier

Tiers of entry

- Foundation Tier – Grades G-C
- Higher Tier – Grades D-A*
- In some subjects you can do a combination of different tiered papers
- If you take Higher Tier papers and do not score enough for a D you are likely to get a U
- Sometimes difficult decisions about the correct pattern of entry for students – particularly in the C/D range

How do we decide?

- Assessment of progress throughout Year 10
- Mock examination in November of Year 11
- Discussion with parents/students at consultation evening
- Decision made by February half-term of Year 11
- Changes can be made later if there is good reason but are rare

Grades to points

- $A^* = 58$
- $A = 52$
- $B = 46$
- $C = 40$
- $D = 34$
- $E = 28$
- $F = 22$
- $G = 16$

Can be reported as total points per candidate, average per entry and total or average capped (best 8)

Controlled Assessment

- This has replaced coursework.
- Controlled assessment still allows students to produce an extended personal piece of work to an area of the specification but:-

There are three levels of 'Control' managed by the teacher

- *Low level* – students can work unsupervised outside the classroom – research.
- *Medium level* – students work under informal supervision – analysis of research.
- *High level* – students complete their work independently and must not communicate with one another – write up.

Controlled Assessment

- Allows students to do independent research
- Heavy workload – can be stressful
- Difficult for those with poor time management skills
- Issues of cheating and plagiarism, especially due to the web

What support is allowed?

- No-one should help the student apart from the teacher who knows the level of support acceptable
- Parents can certainly read the work to show interest and encouragement but they should not help pupils to do the work nor make corrections to it
- Private tutors must not under any circumstances help
- Students may not help each other and should not show each other their work

Plagiarism

- Plagiarism happens when pupils use resources which are not their own without acknowledging it.
- Typical examples would be downloading from the internet, using big chunks of text from a book, copying from an older sibling or another pupil.
- It is fairly easy to spot and staff have a duty to question any work which they suspect may not be the pupil's own.

Implications

- If the school discovers it before it is sent to the exam board then the student receives 0 marks
- If the work has been copied from another student, they both receive 0 marks
- If the exam board discovers the plagiarism they will make the decision which could result in disqualification from all GCSEs

How can you help your child?

- Take an interest in what they are doing
- Know when the deadlines are coming up
- Make sure that they meet the deadlines
- Help them with time management and organisation
- Encourage regular attendance
- Make sure they have a quiet place to study
- Make sure they don't overdo it – they need to have time off

Further support/information

- www.parentscentre.gov.uk (from DfE)
- Exam board websites (Edexcel, OCR, AQA)
- GCSE coursework information booklet from school

Extra support for students

- Web revision – SAMLearning and GCSE Bitesize are the best
- Revision guides – if appropriate
- Revision classes run in school in many subjects
- Mentoring for pupils who are seen to be underachieving

Student Targets

- Students will receive their GCSE aspirational targets with the first snapshot of Year 10. This grade is calculated using a national benchmark formula and is based on the students prior attainment in Key Stage 2 Maths, English and Science.
- This performance generates a points score and this score is used to plot the chances of getting each grade at GCSE.

- As with most schools, we set aspirational targets that, if achieved, would place the student in the top 25% of students in the country with similar Key Stage 2 points.
- Students may of course do much better or much worse than their targets depending on their work in Years 10 and 11.
- Targets are not predictions!

How are targets monitored?

- Snapshots in Years 10 and 11 show progress against the target grades and also give an effort grade
- Pupils who are doing really well will be singled out for congratulation
- Pupils who are not doing so well will be monitored more closely by the form tutor and Year Head
- Mentoring is available in Year 11.

Stress Management

- Serious issue for Year 11 students

Ways of coping:-

- Good diet
- Effective planning
- Meeting deadlines
- Do not 'burn the midnight oil'
- Use effective revision techniques
- Be organised
- Time to relax
- Socialise

Together we can make a very
real difference.