

## Making a Difference

### Helping your son or daughter prepare for GCSEs - Advice for parents and carers

#### Examination Timetable

The majority of GCSE examinations take place between Tuesday 3 May and Friday 25 June 2016.

There are no examinations during the week of the bank holiday, when schools are normally on the half-term break. In 2016, this will be the week beginning 30 May 2016.

Taking a little time off over the bank holiday is a good idea, but your child will need to do quite a lot of revision in that week. Please make sure that he or she has plenty of time for this and that you have not planned to be on holiday for the full week.

*Students who do their best in the GCSE examinations work hard all through Years 9, 10 and 11, rather than relying on last minute revision.*

#### During the spring term

Get your child to check that he or she has all the notes and books needed for revision, and to talk to teachers if anything is needed.

Check that your child has a revision timetable that includes the dates and times of the examinations in May and June. Also include any other important dates (such as birthdays) when you would want your child to take some time off from revision. The College will give your child a blank revision timetable to complete during this term.

Make sure that coursework deadlines are included on the revision timetable. Your child will not be able to complete much revision when he or she is working hard to complete coursework. However, it must be stressed that coursework in most subjects will be completed by this stage; only subjects that are assessed mostly by coursework will have this requirement.

Encourage your child to display the timetable in his or her bedroom, as it will be a constant reminder of what needs to be done and will help to keep your child focused.

Check how your child is doing by letting them explain something that they have just learned. It is a good rule of thumb that if you can follow your child's explanation then he or she will be able to produce a good answer to an examination question on that topic.

Encourage your child to ask for help with work that he or she does not understand – and to persevere even when the workload seems tough!

## Useful revision tips

You can support your child by helping him or her to follow these tips:

- Plan for half hour sessions, or an hour at the most. Any longer and it is likely that nothing will sink in. Take a short break between sessions and have a glass of water to drink.
- In the evenings after College, plan to revise one or two subjects only. Leave some time for relaxation.
- Plan to revise specific topics in each subject, not everything at once.
- Ensure that each session starts with tackling the most difficult bits.
- Plan to cover each subject several times and revisit each one near to the examinations.
- Revising with the television, the radio or loud music on is not a good idea. However, having favourite music on in the background may help.
- Reading is not generally enough. Making brief notes in either words or pictures helps students to remember.
- Have all the books needed to hand so your child does not have to go off looking for information.
- Working with a friend can be useful because it allows them to test each other and to talk about the work.



## During the examination period

Try to ensure that your child gets a good night's sleep before examinations and has all the equipment that he or she needs:

- A couple of black pens and sharp pencils
- A rubber and a ruler
- A watch

**Sometimes, your child will need:**

- A calculator
- A protractor

**In addition, try to ensure that:**

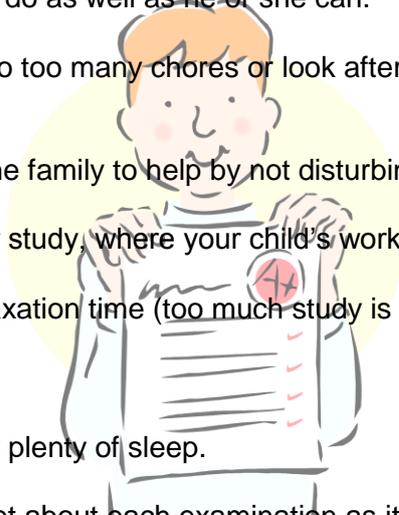
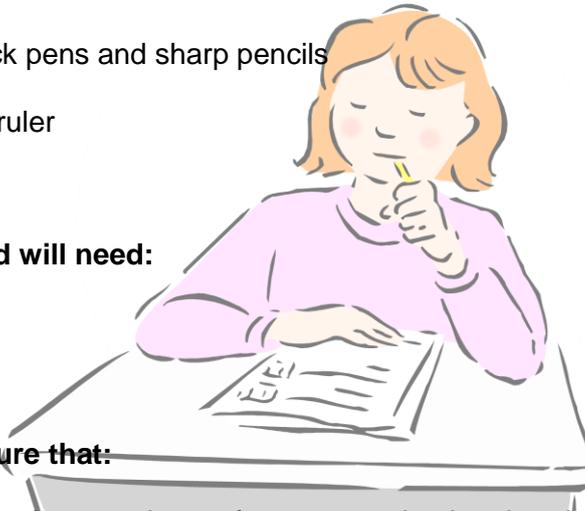
- Your child knows the start times of every examination that day.
- You wish your child well: "You've worked hard enough and you can only do your best."
- You look forward to seeing them at the end of the day.

**And when it's all over . . .** Tell your child to relax and forget about studying for a while.

## What you can do to help

You can help by:

- Recognising how important these examinations are and how much time your child will need if he or she is to do as well as he or she can.
- Not asking your child to do too many chores or look after younger brothers and sisters.
- Encouraging the rest of the family to help by not disturbing revision.
- Securing a quiet place for study, where your child's work can be kept safely.
- Encouraging planned relaxation time (too much study is not helpful).
- Praising hard work.
- Emphasising the need for plenty of sleep.
- Helping your child to forget about each examination as it is finished.
- Reminding your child that it will soon be over and there will be a good break from College when they can catch up on all that they have been missing!



## College Contacts

Please do not hesitate to contact the College if you would like more help or advice to prepare your child for his or her GCSEs.

**St Joseph's Catholic College**  
**Ocotal Way**  
**Swindon**  
**SN3 3LR**

**(01793) 714200**

Listed below are the names of staff you can contact if you need a contact for help or advice. You can also telephone your child's subject teachers.

**Assistant Principal Key Stage 4:** Mrs Kathryn Sanders

**Examinations Officer:** Mr I Cotrell

## Other Materials

Look at useful websites. The College and public libraries have access to the Internet.

Try SAM Learning: [www.samlearning.com](http://www.samlearning.com)

Try BBC Bitesize: [www.bbc.co.uk/education/revision](http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/revision)

Have a look at the materials in bookshops; there are some useful tests, quizzes and revision guides on sale.

