

GCSE Exams

Supporting your child



Information for Parents and Carers

What we do to support revision in school

- Students will be provided with advice regarding revision techniques by their subject teachers. They will also be provided with some revision materials, where appropriate, and directed to helpful sources of support.
- We provide additional revision sessions which students are encouraged to attend. These can take place at lunchtime and after school. We will post information relating to dates and times available on the school website but class teachers will make students aware of when these are taking place.
- We provide intensive revision sessions during school holidays. Dates are posted on the school website.
- Prior to examinations immersion sessions are run during the school day. This might for example mean that the day before a mathematics examination, the normal timetable will be suspended for Y11 so that they can spend a few hours with their mathematics teachers.
- All students are given a personal log in to various websites. These include:
 - GCSE Pod All subjects
 - BBC Bitesize GCSE All subjects
 - PiXL app Mathematics and English
 - Mymaths Mathematics
 - Mathswatch Mathematics

Your child should know their login details for these sites and can get them from their subject teacher, if you would like them, please let us know. These websites provide them with materials to support their learning.

- We provide additional revision support to certain students at risk of under achievement when necessary. This takes a variety of forms. Some students/classes may receive support during their lessons via an additional

adult who may be a teacher or teaching assistant. Another form of support is when students are withdrawn from lessons to be taught by a teacher or a specialist teaching assistant in small groups. If your pupil is identified as being in need of additional support, we will contact you. If your child is experiencing difficulty with any of their subjects, please contact us.

- Some students may also be allocated a mentor. This may be a teacher or an older pupil who will support them throughout the year, ensuring that they stay on track to achieve their potential and listening to any concerns that they may have. If your child is allocated a mentor, we will contact you.

What you can do to support revision at home

How should revision be done?

Subject teachers will be able to provide ideas for effective revision techniques as these vary depending on the subject. Different strategies will work better for some students than others. Copying out long passages of text in a bid to memorise them can be time consuming and may work for some children but be no use to others. Practising exam style questions is recommended for all subjects and teachers can provide these. For languages important vocabulary could be written on flashcards and these could be used for quick fire quizzes. For mathematics it could be helpful to practise mental calculations such as multiplication tables or finding fractions and percentages of quantities by posing questions whilst in the car. Other ideas include creating small revision posters with key facts that can be put up around the house so that they are seen constantly e.g. next to the kettle or on the fridge door.



How much revision should be done?

Whilst we run revision sessions in school, this is not sufficient revision time for pupils. All pupils need to carry out additional revision at home. We believe this is important as it further develops pupils' skills independent learning skills. We want them to be resourceful, knowing where to look for sources for support and identifying their own areas for improvement. It also provides an opportunity to hone time management skills.

Make sure your child understands the importance of starting revision early rather than leaving things until the last couple of weeks before exam season. Starting early (February/March time) will allow them to build their confidence

gradually. The amount of time each pupil needs for revision will depend on them. Some subjects will require more time each week than others. Discuss with your child which subjects they feel least confident with and encourage them to spend more time on these. Some subjects require a little and often approach e.g. 45 minutes three times per week rather than a longer session once per fortnight. Consider at what time of day your child works best and try to work family life around this where possible. If they work best during the morning, can a family outing be delayed until the afternoon?

Implementing a revision timetable can be helpful in ensuring students manage their time well. Encourage them to plan this themselves each week building in other commitments such as school and any clubs, sporting activities or social events first. Fill in the gaps with short blocks of subject based revision dependent on what they feel is most necessary but make sure they are realistic and the timetable is achievable. It is important to build in time for breaks and treats. A template for an exam timetable is available [here](#).

REVISION TIMETABLE

[illegible]

Where should revision be done?

Revision can take place at school, at home, in a local library, at a friend's house, anywhere! It is helpful for students to have a designated work space at home for revision. Where possible, a desk and chair in a quiet, well-lit and ventilated area works best.

Equipment and stationery can be kept in the same place. Some students will not like absolute silence and may prefer to have some background music on. Try to minimise distractions other such as television, computer games and web browsing/social media. Build in time to enjoy these or other favoured activities once revision is completed. For some revision, access to a computer or another device may be necessary. Don't forget to provide snacks!

Who should help with revision?

Teachers, parents, friends, tutors, siblings can all help with revision. Students may want you to test them on recall of facts or help them understand something they are finding challenging. They may also want to be left alone. Some students may want to revise with their friends in a study group. This will work well for some and not for others, it may be more suitable for some subjects than others. It is advisable to let them try it if they are keen and then afterwards encourage them to reflect on whether it was successful or whether, in that instance, independent revision would have been better. Revision, whilst necessary, does not have to be an unbearable task, and if it is possible to make it more enjoyable, take every opportunity.

Ensuring your child fulfils their potential

We have high expectations of all students; we expect them to perform to the best of their ability in both lessons and assessments.

Some subjects at our school enter the pupils for examination earlier in the school year. We do this for a number of reasons. If pupils have a good chance of achieving their target grade it can reduce the number of exams they have to revise for in the summer. It allows more able pupils to study for additional qualifications and for some pupils who find the subject more challenging it provides them with two chances to be successful so they do not have to resit in Y12.

This opportunity has been put in place to maximise opportunities for pupils not limit them. We want our pupils to be ambitious. If they achieve a grade early but we feel they have not achieved their potential, we will advise them to resit. This is due to the fact that places on sixth form course, university courses and in the job market are in greater demand and competition is higher. This allows these places to be more demanding in terms of the grades they want students to have. Many courses are raising the expectation for GCSE mathematics to be a grade B instead of the more traditional grade C. Another reason is that whilst pupils may have chosen a course now that only requires a grade C we do not want them to be disadvantaged if they change their minds at a later date and find they have to retake qualifications later. If you do not want your child to sit examinations early, heads of department are open to discussion and will act in the best interest of each pupil.

Top Tips



DO agree to an appropriate work/life balance with your child so that they are not working so hard they become stressed or being complacent and not revising enough.

DO understand that there will be times throughout the year where they become demotivated and may get upset. Try to support them though this by being understanding and positive.

DO encourage your child to attend the revision sessions that are being held in school.

DON'T be tempted to nag them to revise. Try to get them to realise for themselves how important this is. Try to avoid incentives and bribes unless all else has failed!

DO try and help them if they are stuck. Encourage them to persevere and help them be resourceful by trying to find help in books or online. If this is not successful encourage them to move onto something else and ask a teacher when they are next in school. Follow this up and make sure the issue is resolved.

DO show an interest in the exams, ask how long each exam will last, if they have the equipment that they need and what they might be asked.

DON'T add to their stress levels before an exam. You might be just as nervous as them, but showing them you are will not be helpful.

DO talk about other things. If they have been working all day, when they sit down to relax it might be better to discuss something other than revision in order to allow them to switch off.

DO praise the effort they are making regardless of the progress that is being made.

DO encourage them to be reflective. Get them to consider which revision strategies are working best for them and which are not.

DON'T let them spend a long time making a revision timetable very attractive with different colour for different subjects at the expense of doing some actual revision!

DO contact school if you are worried about how your child is coping with the demands and pressures of Y11.

Further support:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/parents/helping_with_exams/

http://www.youngminds.org.uk/for_parents/parents_guide

Mathematics

Qualification information



Your child will take two mathematics qualifications. These are

GCSE Mathematics and GCSE Mathematics-Numeracy

The examination board is WJEC.

Each qualification has two examinations, one is taken without a calculator and a calculator is allowed for the other. For the two qualifications, pupils will take four examinations in total.

There is no coursework and no controlled assessment.

There are three tiers of entry. These grades available for each tier are shown below.

Higher	A*	A	B	C				
Intermediate			B	C	D	E		
Foundation					D	E	F	G

We may enter different qualifications at different tiers e.g. higher for mathematics, intermediate for mathematics-numeracy. Your child will know their tier of entry.

Support we offer

As a department we are keen to provide as much support as we can to pupils. All staff provide after school revision sessions and a timetable detailing when these are available is posted on the school website, please encourage your child to attend.

We also run revision sessions during half term and Easter holidays, again details are provided on the website.

We have a department youtube channel which has instructional videos for how to complete certain topics and model answers to exam questions.

What you can do to help your child?

Helping your child take a positive approach to mathematics will be beneficial. In the UK many people lack confidence in this key subject but being negative and making statements such as “I don’t like maths” or “I was never any good at maths” makes it difficult for children to understand why they need to learn the subject.

In addition to the general revision advice provided you can also encourage your child to:

- Spend time on their mathematics homework ensuring they complete and understand the tasks set.
- Seek support when necessary. If they are struggling in class or with homework they should ask their maths teacher for help. If homework is proving challenging they should see their teacher before it is due to be handed in, if possible.
- Come well equipped to their mathematics lessons and tests. They will need a pen, pencil, ruler, a pair of compasses, an angle measurer or protractor and a scientific calculator. We recommend the Casio Scientific calculators that are available to buy in school or most supermarkets as the screen allows the user to see the entire calculation entry, thus reducing the chance of errors.

- Pay attention to and act on the advice of their teacher's feedback. Feedback may be verbal or written. If they have missed work or not completed tasks this will be identified in their exercise books and should be completed as soon as possible. They should always try to correct any incorrect work and ensure they understand where they have gone wrong.

Sources of further support

Revision Guides

It is not essential to buy a revision guide but some pupils find them helpful. Hodder Education produce the only revision guide associated with the WJEC qualifications your child is sitting and these are available to buy in school. If you have mathematics revision guides already that you have purchased for older children these will still be useful but be wary that there is now different tiers and additional content on the GCSE so these should be used in conjunction with the revision list for the correct tier.



Websites

MathsWatch <https://www.mathswatchvle.com/>

MathsWatch is a set of mathematics resources (videos and worksheets).

My Maths <http://www.mymaths.co.uk/>

All students have individual logins and mathematics teachers can assign homework and monitor each student's usage. The site provides online, interactive lessons with games and "online homeworks" that provide instant feedback. It covers the vast majority of the mathematics curriculum. Each of the topics which are listed by mathematical area (e.g. algebra) and then ordered by difficulty (national curriculum level or GCSE tier - F for foundation, H for higher). Tasks can also be repeated to improve scores with the questions changing each time. Your child should see their mathematics teacher for their log in. Teachers can set homeworks and monitor pupils' progress.

BBC Bitesize <http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/subjects/z6pfb9q>

This easy to use site contains notes, activities, explanatory videos and tests for each topic

Gaming sites –

These provide online maths games for students to play either on their own or against other students around the world. They provide a fantastic opportunity for learners to have lots of repeated practice whilst having fun.

www.sumdog.com

www.ttrockstars.com

www.mangahigh.com

www.tutpup.com

English Language GCSE

Exam Board: WJEC

There is only one tier of entry for English Language – everyone does the same exam.

Unit 1 Non Examination Assessment Oracy 20% 2 hours

Task 1 (10%) – Individual Presentation

- Research a theme and give a presentation to the class.
- The presentation should last between 5 – 7 minutes including questions.
 - Themes:
 - Wales
 - Leisure
 - The World of Work
 - The World of Science/Technology
 - Citizenship

Task 2 (10%) – Responding and Interacting

- One group discussion based on the pre-published resources.
- The discussion should last for about 10 minutes per group

Both tasks will be recorded by your son / daughter's teacher.

Half of the marks available will be awarded for **spoken accuracy**.

Pupils have **one week** to prepare the presentation and **one week** to prepare for the discussion.

These will take place at different times over the course of the GCSE.

How you can help your child with oracy

- Make sure you know the dates for the two tasks.
- Help them to research and find additional resources on the set themes / topics.
- Listen to your son / daughter as they rehearse their presentation.
- Go through the suggested questions to help your son / daughter develop ideas on the themes.
- Look at BBC bitesize with them (Spoken Language section for Wales)
 - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/guides/z3ydv4j/revision>
 - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/guides/z8ydv4j/revision>
- Make sure that they can back up their opinions with evidence.

Unit 2 Exam 40% 2 hours Reading and Writing Description, Narration and Exposition

Section A (20%) – Reading (40 marks) (1 Hour)

- Answer questions on different extracts.
- There will be at least three texts, could be up to five or six.
- This section will also include an editing task focusing on understanding short texts (2.5% of qualification total).

Section B (20%) – Writing (40 marks) (1 Hour)

- One writing task from a choice of two: description (describe a moment in time or a travelogue), narration (story) or exposition (discursive essay).
- This section will also include one proofreading task focusing on writing accurately (2.5% of qualification total).
- 20 marks for this section will be awarded for content (meaning, purpose, readers and structure) and 15 marks for writing accurately (language, grammar, punctuation and spelling).

Unit 3 Exam 40% 2 hours Reading and Writing Argumentation, Persuasion and Instruction

Section A (20%) Reading (1 Hour)

- Answer questions on different extracts.
- There will be at least three texts, could be up to five or six

Section B (20%) Writing (1 Hour)

- Two writing tasks (Letter/article/speech/review etc.)

- No choice.
- Linked thematically to Section A.
- 10 + 10 for each task
- Half of the marks for this section will be awarded for content (meaning, purpose, readers and structure) and the other half for writing accurately (language, grammar, punctuation and spelling).

Accuracy

Half of the marks for the oracy and the writing sections are for accuracy.

Students must be able to write in full sentences and spell words correctly.

They must be able to shape sentences for effect.

How can you support this?

- Proof reading activities (revision booklet)
- Editing tasks (revision booklet)
- BBC Bitesize grammar activities
- Grammar PowerPoints and activities
- Encourage your child to speak in full sentences.

Students say they can't revise for English ... they can!

Encourage your child to read. This does not have to be novels but could be articles about things in which they are interested:

- Newspapers
- Articles
- On-line articles

How can you help with revision?

Ask questions about their reading of newspaper and magazine articles:

- What does [this word] mean?
- What is the article about?
- Who is the audience and how do you know?
- What is the attitude of the writer to the topic and how do you know?
- Does the article show bias? How?
- What is the purpose of the article?

What does revision look like?

- Students might make revision 'how to videos' on specific question types
- Record success criteria / writing layout on a mobile phone / tablet and play back when doing something else
- Peer tutoring work with a partner and teach them the success criteria for different question types.

- Complete practice papers / questions - electronic and paper form
- BBC Bitesize
- Completion of proof reading tasks
- Short burst tasks making use of commercially available materials CGP (Spelling, punctuation and grammar packs for GCSE) revision guides
- Examine modelled answers for D/C and A/A*
- Summarise success criteria for various reading questions
- Summarise formats for different types of writing
- Highlight key facts from articles
- Learn key words or phrases for responses
- Use spider diagrams or mind maps
- Make revision cards
- Use mnemonics to remember information

Useful websites:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/subjects/zr9d7ty>

<http://www.revisioncentre.co.uk/gcse/english/>

<http://www.englishbiz.co.uk/> - great for revising the writing part of the Unit 02 exam. Look at the grammar, spelling, punctuation and writing articles areas of the website.

Science

Science has two tiers of entry (Foundation G-C and Higher D-A*)

Year 10

Pupils in Year 10 are doing Science qualifications which are a two year course which awards double grades at the end of Year 11 (i.e. CC, BC, BB, AB etc).

There are no controlled assessments, but a practical exam in Year 11 is worth 10% of final grade.

Year 10 exams can be resat in the summer of Year 11 (no January resits).

Year 10 have catch up/revision sessions every Monday after school.








Year 11

Pupils in Year 11 need to complete any controlled assessments by Easter (Additional Science and IVQ courses).

Year 11 have catch up/revision sessions every Thursday after school.

Additional Science exams are in May but the IVQ exam is in June.










If you have any questions or concerns then please contact Mr Hughes Head of Science.

The cell	Respiration	Digestion
		
Generating Electricity	Making use of energy	Building electric circuits
		
Obtaining clean water	Our Planet	Producing useful compounds
		



QR code to Unit 1 student eBook
 (Revision guide with questions)

QR codes for each topic above include:
 GCSE Pod video clips (mp4 files); PiXL
 Therapy slides (PDF doc); PiXL
 Diagnostic and Final tests (Word doc);
 and PiXL Solutions to Diagnostic and
 Final tests (Word doc)

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1.1 Cells and movement across cell membranes	1.2 Respiration and the human respiratory system	1.3 Digestion and the human digestion system
		
1.4 The circulatory system in humans	1.5 Plants and Photosynthesis	1.5 Plants and Photosynthesis (Triple)
		
1.6 Ecosystems, nutrient cycles and the human impact on the environment	1.6 Ecosystems, nutrient cycles and the human impact on the environment (Triple)	QR codes for each topic include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GCSE Pod video clips (mp4 files) • PiXL Therapy slides (PDF doc) • PiXL Diagnostic and Final tests (Word doc) • PiXL Solutions to Diagnostic and Final tests (Word doc)
		

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St Cenydd Science Department

Year 10 Chemistry QR codes







2.1 The nature of substances and chemical reactions	2.2 Atomic structure and the periodic table	2.3 Water
		
2.4 The ever-changing Earth	2.5 Rate of chemical change	2.6 Limestone (Triple only)
		

QR codes for each topic include:

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St Cenydd Science Department

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QR codes for each topic include:

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- PiXL Therapy slides (PDF doc)
- PiXL Diagnostic and Final tests (Word doc)
- PiXL Solutions to Diagnostic and Final tests (Word doc)

3.1 Electric circuits	3.2 Generating electricity	3.3 Making use of energy
		
3.4 Domestic electricity	3.5 Features of waves	3.6 The total internal reflection of waves (Triple)
		
3.7 Seismic waves (Triple)	3.8 Kinetic theory (Triple)	3.9 Electromagnetism (Triple)
		

QR codes for each topic include: GCSE Pod video clips (mp4 files); PiXL Therapy slides (PDF doc); PiXL Diagnostic and Final tests (Word doc); and PiXL Solutions to Diagnostic and Final tests (Word doc)

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Key Contacts

We welcome contact from parents when you have any questions or issues you need to discuss. For subject specific matters we ask that you contact your child's teacher in the first instance, where possible, before contacting the head of department. Other key contacts include:

- Mr Satterly Head of Year 11
- Mr Corke Head of Year 10
- Mrs Karen Davies Assistant Headteacher KS4

Exam Wellbeing

Please follow this link to Leah's site with advice on exam time wellbeing.

<http://leahsiandavies.co.uk/be-your-own-best-study-buddy-podcast-ep-1-revision-planning/>