



EXAMINATIONS
Parent/Carer Handbook
2021/22



Parent/Carer Information

1. Introduction

The next few months are crucial for your child as they will sit their GCSEs this academic year. These are important exams for your child, as the grades achieved will determine what opportunities they will have in life. You will want them to achieve the best grades that they can, and this is possible when there is a partnership between the student, the College and parents/carers.

Most of the information on how to succeed in exams is aimed at helping students. This booklet, however, it is aimed at you, the parent/carers. It looks at your perspectives on the exam process from a parent/carers point of view and advises you on how best to help and support your child during the run-up to GCSEs.

There are a number of simple things that you can do to help prepare your child. During the run-up to exams, stress levels can rise and there may be times when you feel that you are sitting the exams rather than your child. However, your help and support through their final year at Castle Donington College will prove invaluable!

2. How you can help?

You do not have to be an expert in any of the subjects your child studies to make a difference; you just need to know how you can support them. Your support, encouragement and interest can make a big difference to your child's motivation and ability to cope with the academic and organisational demands during the exam period.

2a. Make sure your child is at the College every day and on time

Make sure your child attends College every day and understands the importance of making the most of lesson-time. Government statistics show that there is a link between attendance, punctuality and results at GCSE. Every day lost reduces your child's chance of achieving their best.

According to research by the DfE, students with 100% attendance are 1.5 times more likely to achieve higher gradings in their GCSEs.

2b. It's never too early to start revising!

If your child tells you they don't have any homework, check ShowMyHomework. You could suggest they do some revision instead. It is never too early to start!

It is best for students to start revision early and to keep revising during the year by doing little and often. This will give your child time to review what he/she has studied and to improve their recall skills. It will help to avoid the panic of leaving things to the last minute.

Summer 2022 GCSE exams will begin on **Monday 16th May 2022** and run until **Wednesday 29th June 2022** (including the Contingency date). Some exams take place earlier, for example language orals and practical examinations. Your child will receive their individual timetable in the Spring Term. It is useful to keep a copy of the timetable at home to check dates, to make sure they are equipped for each exam and to provide encouragement.

2c. Encourage your child to complete their Non Exam Assessment/Controlled Assessment on time

Controlled Assessments count and can make a huge difference to a student's final grade. In some subjects, coursework counts for as much as 60% of the marks. If Controlled Assessment/Non Exam Assessment is handed in on time, your child may get feedback from their teacher on how it could be improved (wherever possible) in order to improve their grade. Urge them not to leave everything until the last minute. They may panic, and are likely to rush the work and not do as well because they are under pressure.

3. Mock Exams

Mocks are held immediately after the Christmas holidays and an additional mock series will be held after halfterm. They provide the opportunity to identify gaps in learning and try out revision and preparation strategies. If your child's grades are disappointing, encourage them to talk to their teachers and start working on the subjects where they need to improve. Mocks are a trial run, students need to learn from them and adapt their strategies if needed.

4. Tips to help your child revise effectively

- Agree the rules for homework or revision, helping them to make a realistic timetable, balancing work time against recreation time and reviewing the plans as necessary.
- Have the timetable displayed in their room and help them stick to the plan.
- Ensure they have the time and somewhere quiet to study. Encourage the rest of the family to give them space and peace whilst they revise.
- Encourage your child to use the revision methods they have been taught i.e. mind maps, brief notes, pictures, spider diagrams. Just reading things through won't always work! The more they process information, the more likely it is to stick!
- Get them to tell you what they know, teaching someone else helps information recall.
- Encourage them to attend revision sessions offered by the school and to ask for help on any subjects they don't understand.
- Make sure they eat properly and drink plenty of water. The brain works better when the body is fed and watered.
- Emphasise the need for plenty of sleep, especially the night before an exam.
- No matter what they tell you, television and loud music do not help revision, but quiet background music might.
- Go along to Parents' Evening and the Information Evening. Ask questions and find out how you can best help your child at home.
- Ask to see your child's revision notes and check how they are doing. Let them explain something to you. If you understand the explanation, then they will be able to produce a good answer in the exam.
- Try to be positive and reassuring to build their confidence.
- Make sure they continue to attend lessons up to the examination in each subject.
- Ask them to put their social life on hold, they can celebrate when it's all over.
- Remember that young people may be stressed and anxious. Try to encourage rather than 'nag'. Explain the benefits of exam success.
- Allow them to revise with a friend, on occasion, as this can help to allow them to test each other and talk about the work.

5. Exam Day

Ensure they get up on time and are at school at least 30 minutes before the exam is due to start. Check that they have everything they need:

- Black pens and sharpened pencils (2 of each)
- A rubber and a ruler
- Additional equipment i.e. calculator protractor etc.
- Ensure they are in school uniform.
- Remind them to turn their mobile phones off before placing in their lockers or, better still, **encourage them to leave their phone at home.**
- Know their seat number.
- Wish them luck as they leave.

You should encourage your child to eat before an exam, avoid skipping breakfast or not eating because they are too nervous. Very simply, their brains need the energy from food to work efficiently. It would be a shame to have studied intensively before an exam and then be too tired to do their best on the exam day.

Encourage your child to bring a bottle of water in a clear plastic bottle with labels removed. Dehydration can make you lose concentration, feel faint and drain your energy. By the time they feel thirsty, they are already dehydrated, encourage them to drink water throughout the day.

6. Results Day

Information on results day is provided in the Student Handbook, but we will also write to you in June confirming the day and time that results can be collected.

7. What extra support does the College offer?

In addition to lessons, which will continue up to the day of the exam, we will be offering:

- Structured revision programmes. Departments will organise these, often at lunchtimes and after school.
- A series of Study Skills workshops during PSHEE days and registration lessons to help your child learn how to revise effectively.

- Provide practice exam papers and revision aids.
- Additional help for those students who have been identified as having particular needs.
- Staff available to discuss problems and concerns with individual students.

8. What else can you do to help?

- Recognise the importance of GCSE exams and the preparation time needed to do as well as possible.
- Reward your child's efforts to revise.
- Reduce the number of chores that they have to do when exams start.
- Make sure that the whole family respects the importance of keeping disturbances to a minimum.
- Be sensitive to the pressure and stress that your child may be experiencing. Encourage them to speak to you about it.
- Make sure that time is built in for exercise and recreation.
- Respect their growing independence. Ask them how you can best support them.
- Help them to keep things in perspective.

9. Contacts

There are a team of people who are here to help your child at Castle Donington College:

Principal	Mrs Julie Sheppard
Vice Principal	Mr Nathan Barratt
Assistant Principal	Mr Ben Wilkinson
Examination Officer	Mrs Debbie Shatford
SENCo	Mrs Alexa Burns
Head of Year 11	Mr Edward Nelson
Y11 Form Tutors	Mr Ashley Brennan
	Mr Damian Woolf
	Mr James Melvin
	Mr Martin Elks
	Ms Sandrine Amyot

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the College on 01332 810528 or email examinations@cdcollege.uk

Remember, how you approach your child's exam experience can have a real impact on their future.

Studies show that high parental interest is linked to better exam results.

Useful Information

AQA www.aqa.org.uk

JCQ www.jcq.org.uk

Ofqual www.ofqual.gov.uk

DfE www.education.gov.uk

Edexcel www.edexcel.com

WJEC www.wjec.co.uk

JCQ access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and special consideration
www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-specialconsideration/regulations-and-guidance

JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations

www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice-instructions-for-conducting-examinations

Grading new GCSEs from 2017

New grading structure	Current grading structure
9	A*
8	
7	
6	B
5	
4	
3	D
2	
1	
U	U



Is your child studying for GCSEs?

If so, or if they will in the future, we want you to be aware that GCSEs in England are changing – this started with English and maths in 2017. The reforms ensure that young people have the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in the 21st Century. The new GCSEs ensure that students leave school better prepared for work or further study. They cover more challenging content and are designed to match standards in high performing education systems elsewhere in the world.

Top facts about the new GCSEs

1. The new GCSEs in England have a 9 to 1 grading scale, to better differentiate between the highest performing students and distinguish clearly between the old and new qualifications.
2. Grade 9 is the highest grade and will be awarded to fewer students than the old A*.
3. The first exams in new GCSEs for English language, English literature and maths were sat in summer 2017 and the rest of the new GCSEs will be introduced over the following three years to 2020.
4. The old and new GCSE grading scales do not directly compare but there are three points where they align, as the diagram shows:
 - The bottom of grade 7 is aligned with the bottom of grade A;
 - The bottom of grade 4 is aligned with the bottom of grade C; and
 - The bottom of grade 1 is aligned with the bottom of grade G.
5. Although the exams will cover more challenging content, students will not be disadvantaged by being the first to sit the new GCSEs. The approach used by Ofqual, the qualifications regulator in England, ensures that, all things being equal, broadly the same proportion of students will get grades 1, 4 and 7 and above in the reformed subjects, as would have got G, C or A and above in the old system.

Department for Education

GCSE Grading	
New Grading Structure	Old Grading Structure
9	A*
8	
7	A
6	
5	B
4	C
3	
2	D
	E
	F
1	G
U	U

