

St Philip Howard Catholic High School



# Preparing for Examinations

A guide for  
parents and pupils

## **Preparing for Examinations**

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If your son/daughter is to achieve the challenging target grade identified in each subject area, it is vital that the pupil, school and home work closely together to ensure that the preparation for the summer examinations is thorough. This guide is intended to help you support your child in his/her revision so that he/she can make the most of what they know, understand and can do. Unfortunately, it does not offer a way round any lack of effort in the past, but can help make the best use of the time remaining.

Within school, each subject area is already implementing its own strategies for supporting your child in his/her examination preparation. These may include extra lessons, comprehensive revision programmes, review of coursework etc.

I am sure that you, like all parents, are concerned as to the role you can play in supporting your son/daughter in his/her examination preparation. To assist you in this area, we have developed a booklet containing tried and tested advice on revision techniques.

### **Homework**

Continue to check homework and sign the student planner.

### **Be Prepared**

- Buy a set of files– one for each exam you will take.
- File information from lessons into each folder.
- Start EARLY, this will help ease the stress.
- Get a good revision book/CD ROM or aid for each subject.
- Keep everything you need in one place to avoid wasting time at the beginning of each session.

### **Parental Support**

- Agree a revision schedule.
- Use the information provided on revision to help your child prepare efficiently.
- Try to ensure that he/she is revising in the correct way.
- Encourage an early start.
- Regularly discuss progress/preparation. Help if you can.
- Always remember to encourage without pressurising.
- Work out the best place for you to revise – don't fool yourself that you can work in front of the TV.
- Make sure that breaks are taken regularly.
- Plan family activities around timetabled revision periods.
- Build in "treats" during the revision period.
- Try to make sure your child eats well and gets plenty of sleep.
- Be positive - help them relax - don't panic.
- Facebook – many students admit to using Facebook whilst revising. This is a distraction and should be discouraged.

### **Revision programmes**

Many subjects provide revision notes and organise revision sessions. Try to make sure that your child makes full use of any opportunities provided.

I hope the advice given will prove useful. If you would like more help, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

## Revision 1 : Planning your Time

You must remember that you need to start revision early. Intensive pre-examination revision should cover a period of approximately 8 weeks before the examination. Therefore, some two months before the examination you should draw up a schedule of revision and preparation which will take you through to the day of your final examination.

Use a revision timetable like the example shown below. Work in short blocks of time. Each revision period should be no more than an hour long, followed by a ten-minute break. Set targets in each revision block. Make sure that you build in times for relaxation.

WEEK COMMENCING: .....

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
3.00-4.00							
4.00-5.00							
5.00-6.00							
6.00-7.00							
7.00-8.00							
8.00-9.00							
9.00-10.00							

TASKS FOR THE WEEK
Include reading and rough work, as well as finally writing-up. Insert as bullet points and after each item include the amount of time it is likely to take you and the deadline date.
▶
▶
▶
▶
▶
▶

vti/resources/exam/revision timetable

Make sure that your parents have a copy of your revision timetable.

For each subject, note the particular topic you intend revising in that session (eg not just science, but 'photosynthesis' or 'acids and alkalis').

## Summary

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### **EIGHT WEEKS TO GO**

- Check all notes. Now is the time to ask teachers to clarify points. Make sure that you understand everything – it is much harder to learn something if you don't understand it.
- Organise revision time. Plan weekly blocks, allocating time to each subject. Build in extra time for weaker subjects. Plan revision periods of about 50 minutes – don't forget breaks between sessions and making time for relaxation. Don't revise the same subject in consecutive sessions. Make a wall chart so that you can tick off the sessions?
- Build in some treats.
- Work out how to revise. Will you re-work your notes, or make revision cards? Don't just copy notes out; find some way of re-organising them.
- Make sure you find time to relax.
- Pay special attention to diet and exercise. Exercise relieves stress and makes you more alert.
- Remember to review your plan and change if it is isn't working.

### **THE FINAL WEEK**

- Revise subjects in a day-to-day timetable.
- Have at least two good relaxation sessions this week.
- Take at least 15 minutes of exercise in the fresh air every day this week.
- List everything you need for the first two or three days of exams – get them all ready.
- Take care with you diet – fresh food, avoid caffeine.
- Don't think negatively. Don't panic. Be grateful for a slight nervousness – remember a little stress makes you perform better!
- Don't join in 'doom and gloom' talk with friends.

## EXAM DAY

- Make sure you have plenty of time – no rushing today.
- Eat a good breakfast.
- Try not to do any last minute revision – just read through any vital notes if you really have to.
- Relax just before you go into the exam room – have a walk around the field.
- If you feel panic rising, do some deep breathing to relax.
- Remember that nervousness is normal and gives the brain extra adrenalin which will help you make the final effort.
- Remind yourself of the exam structure.
- Read the instructions and every question carefully before you start to write.
- If your mind goes blank – don't panic. There will be some of the paper you can do. Read it slowly and calmly.
- Keep a close eye on the time. Allow time to finish every question and check it through. Allow ten minutes at the end for checking and correcting.
- Keep to a timescale for each question based on the number of marks given.
- Where there are several questions to answer, tackle those you are most confident about first.
- Always check through your work at the end. Examiners have said it is possible to increase your score by one grade by doing this.
- If you have another exam on the same day, have something to eat and get some fresh air. Relax and read through any last minute notes for the next exam.



