

Testbourne Community School

YEAR 10
PREPARING FOR EXAMS
INFORMATION BOOKLET





Testbourne Community School

Achievement • Excellence • Integrity

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Introduction

The GCSE specifications which our students now study are undoubtedly more challenging and involve a lot more content being memorised than ever before. The sheer volume of material that students need to memorise means that revision is a long-term process and not a last-minute fix. Unfortunately, we cannot learn the content for our students, they need to spend many hours learning the key words, formulae, statistics, quotes and concepts for themselves. There are no short cuts to revision and recalling information and therefore for students to be successful, they will need to put in the hard yards.

The Year 10 exams give students a taste of what it is like to have a series of back-to-back examinations across the breadth of the curriculum. Students need to spend time revising and preparing for these exams so they can find the most effective way for them to memorise information. Often there is an element of trial and error whereby students try different revision strategies and then settle upon the ones which yield the best results in plenty of time before their real GCSE exams. Like all skills, revision takes practice, and the Year 10 mock exams are an ideal opportunity for this.

Success in mock exams is not about cramming in revision the night before. Successful students revise over an extended period of time, which means they can plan for any extra-curricular activities or social events. These can still be enjoyed and can provide a welcome break from studying if revision plans are put in place.

GCSE Revision Timetable



Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
9am							
10am							
11am							
12pm							
1pm							
2pm							
3pm							
4pm							
5pm							
6pm							

Mock Exams

Year 10 Mock Exams

Core subject exams will take place in the main exam venues, such as the Sports Hall. This will allow students to experience what it is like to sit your exams under JCQ exam conditions. Although this may be daunting at first, it means that by the time you sit your real GCSE exams, you have become comfortable and familiar with the routines and expectations. Students who have been tested and are entitled to Access Arrangements will have these in place.

Mock exams do cause disruption to lesson and learning time so we will try to minimise the impact of this. Your core exams will take place where possible, during core lesson time. Your option subjects may have their exams during their double lessons in class. This means classes are not disrupted by half the students missing or arriving late because they have been in another exam.

Expectations

GCSE exams are taken under very strict JCQ rules. This ensures that every student in the country sits their GCSE exams under the same, fair conditions. At Testbourne our mock exams are designed to replicate these rules so students become accustomed to them and therefore find the experience less daunting in the real thing. The JCQ 'Information for Candidates' and other guidance can be found on our website.

We will take students through all the key information during an assembly but here are a few top tips:

- Keep your exam timetable safe – it gives you all the details you will need – day, time, room. Your exam timetable will be emailed to your school email account approximately one week before. We suggest taking a photo of it on your phone when you receive it.
- Turn up promptly to the tennis courts 15 minutes before your exam is due to start.
- Don't be late! There are strict regulations that we have to abide by regarding lateness and depending on the exam you may not be allowed entry into the exam room. The start time published on your timetable is the time at which you begin answering the paper therefore you need to be lined up on the tennis courts well in advance.
- Line up according to your seat number and the signs on the tennis courts. You need to know your seat number before your turn up to the tennis courts but can always check the exams noticeboard if you forget.
- We line up in silence and Heads of Department will usually deliver a pre-exam warm up.
- Full school uniform must be worn to all exams.
- Bring your clear pencil case to all exams with all your equipment (black non-erasable pens only) and calculators (without their cover) where appropriate.

- Water bottles should be clear and have labels removed.
- If you have a locker then you must put your bag in there or find an alternative safe place before coming to the exam room. No bags are allowed in the exam rooms.
- Your phone/iPod/MP3 player/ear buds/watch are not allowed into the exam room. If you bring any of these items into a mock exam you will get zero for that paper.
- You must also remove any headphones and tie long hair back.

From the moment you enter the exam room you are under exam conditions.

If you have any worries about the exam process, please speak to Dr Wilson or Mr Ryan-Culver. You can also find information on our website - [Exam Information](#).

Equipment

Being prepared for exams is really important. It reduces any pre-exam nerves and allows you to achieve the best marks possible on the papers. We do not lend students equipment in exams. If you haven't brought the correct equipment you will have to re-sit the exam again after school with the right equipment at a later date.

All equipment must be in a clear plastic pencil case. This is so invigilators can see that no additional notes are within your pencil case.

Students with severe medical conditions who would normally have medication on them (inhalers, EpiPens, diabetic kit) should ensure they are in a clear plastic (freezer/zip lock) bag.

Calculators should have the memory cleared before any exam. Any calculator lids or covers should be removed. You are likely to need your calculator in Maths but also in Science, Business, Geography and DT therefore it is best to bring it to most exams.

Exam pencil case checklist

- Ensure you have **several** black, non-erasable pens
- Highlighters (can be used to highlight the question)
- Pencils
- Sharpener
- Rubber
- Ruler
- Protractor
- Compass
- Scientific calculator
- Clear plastic pencil case
- Spare hair bands if you have long hair

If due to personal circumstances such as financial hardship, you are unable to source these items, please speak to your Head of Year.

Supporting Students with Exams

Attendance

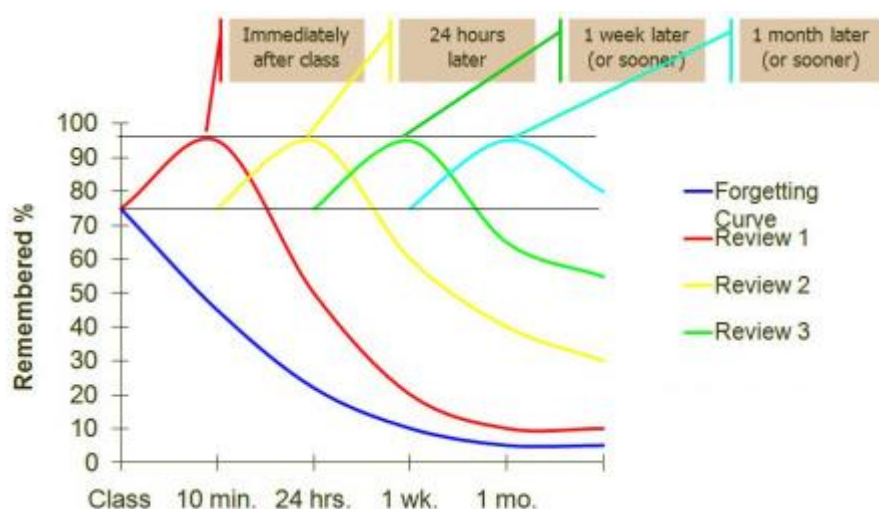
There is lots of evidence to emphasise that attendance in school is essential to success at GCSE. Headaches, minor coughs and colds shouldn't stop students from coming into school.

It is important to have breakfast before coming into school and ensure you bring plenty of water (in a clear bottle with no label). In the warmer weather it is important to stay hydrated so you can concentrate. Sometimes longer exams may run into a break time therefore it is wise to bring food with you just in case.

Preparation

Putting your revision timetable somewhere central in your house, such as pinning it on the fridge, means that your family can help remind you. If everyone knows when you have exams they can wish you luck and support you.

Revision and exam preparation at home is a lot of hard work. There are no short cuts and it isn't easy, however it is a relatively short period of your lives which will require this intense effort. Students inevitably forget information, so the regular revisiting of information and regular low-stakes quizzes is really important. We show students 'The Forgetting Curve' to demonstrate the importance of revising content several times to ensure it stays in our long-term memory. Only 50% of information learnt on day 1 is likely to be remembered the following day, therefore revisiting it and learning it again a 2nd and 3rd time will improve the amount retained. To allow students time to do this, revision must be a long-term task which starts today.



If you have concerns about a particular issue during the next few weeks, please do get in touch with the relevant teacher, tutor or Head of Year as soon as possible. Often concerns can quickly be resolved with swift intervention.

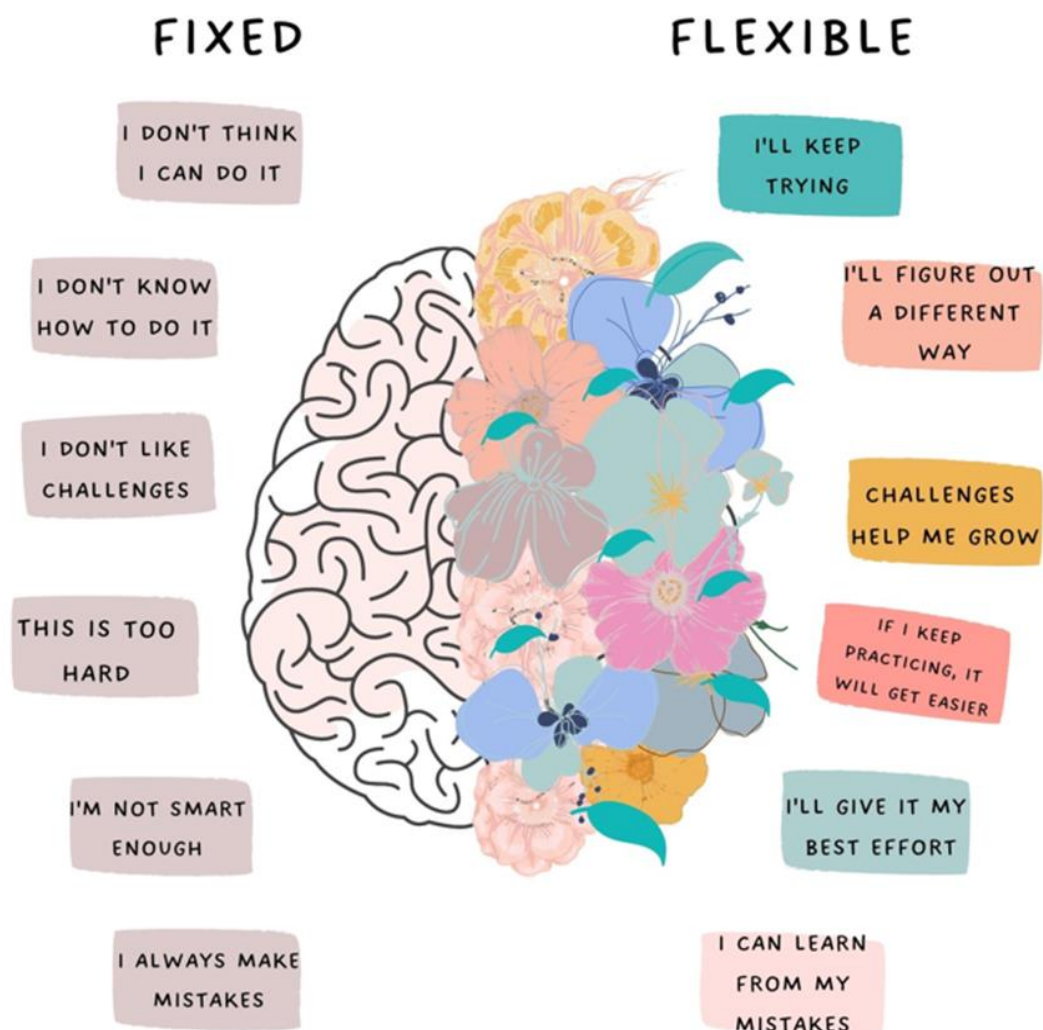
Wellbeing

Good quality sleep is essential to a successful school day and exam. Please encourage lights out (and Wi-Fi off!) at a sensible time and impose limits on games and screen time late at night. Sleep, good diet and regular exercise are important to help your child perform well at school. Removing phones or tablets during revision time is a good plan because it reduces distractions and they can then be used as a reward after. When your child is revising, they should set realistic targets to work towards and recognise when progress has been made.

Exams are an opportunity to show what you can do – they are a challenge, not a threat. Thinking positively makes a massive difference to your mental wellbeing – encourage your child to approach challenges with a growth mindset.

GROWTH MINDSET

Change your mindset - change your life



Wellbeing resources

There is a wealth of wellbeing resources for students to access through Testbourne MindKind via the student portal on SharePoint.

In addition, the contacts and websites below can provide wellbeing and mental health support for students:

AnxietyUK 03444 775 774

Papyrus 0800 068 41 41

www.annafreud.org

www.camhs-resources.co.uk

www.childline.org.uk

www.getselfhelp.co.uk

www.harmless.org.uk

www.lifesigns.org.uk

www.studentsagainstdepression.org

www.studentminds.org.uk

www.thecalmzone.net

www.youngminds.org.uk

Effective Revision

What does good revision look like?

Some students spend a lot of time making beautifully neat revision cards and spider diagrams or claim they revise by re-reading and highlighting. These are all proven to be ineffective and give students a false sense of security. The most effective revision technique is using low stakes quizzes, either through making question and answer flashcards or using an online quizzing tool and then moving on to practice papers. Parents and carers can really help by offering to quiz their child at the end of their revision time for a few minutes. The act of recalling that information for the quick quiz will help it stick for longer.

For some students a proper mind map may be beneficial before using practice papers or quizzes (see Tony Buzan on YouTube).

Retrieval practice

Retrieval practice is used widely in school. It means recalling information without having it in front of you. Research shows this is much more effective than reading and re-reading information. As part of your revision, you can complete low-stakes tests then check your answers. You could also write down all the key points you can remember about a topic using a black pen, then go back to your notes and add anything you missed using a red pen.

What the research says...

Does work

- Quick quizzes
- GCSEpod check and challenge
- Q&A flashcards
- Dual coding – pictures and words
- Teaching someone else
- Past papers & mark schemes

Doesn't work

- Re-reading
- Highlighting notes
- Copying notes onto flashcards
- Music on in the background
- Phones in the room
- Making revision posters

Create a revision-friendly environment

Where you revise is just as important as how you revise. Work with your child to create a revision-friendly environment at home.



Revision Resources

Subject Revision Lists

Your teachers will upload revision lists onto Teams and SharePoint for you to use in preparation for your mock exams. They are helpful to plan your revision into a revision timetable. BBC bitesize has some great tips in putting together a revision timetable, click [here](#) to find out more.

Past Papers

These can be accessed from the exam board websites:

- AQA [AQA | Find past papers and mark schemes](#)
- Eduqas [Past Papers and Mark Schemes](#)
- Pearson/Edexcel [Past papers | Past exam papers | Pearson qualifications](#)
- OCR [Past papers materials finder - OCR](#)

Mind Mapping

Tony Buzan has written dozens of books on the topic of Mind Mapping and travels around the world to educate people about mind mapping. This article details his three rules on how to mind map effectively.

[How To Mind Map With Tony Buzan \(Using 3 Simple Rules\) | MindMaps Unleashed](#)

Revision Websites

www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize

www.corbettmaths.com

www.duolingo.com

www.gcsepod.com

www.kerboodle.com

www.memrise.com

www.mymaths.co.uk

www.quizlet.com

www.senecalearning.com

What is it?

- One website, 3 apps and over 6000 Pods
- Can be used on mobile devices, tablets and PCs
- Short 3-5 minute clips
- Helps with learning, homework and revision
- Selected material for our exam boards
- It is free for Year 10s and Year 11s in Testbourne

How does it work?

- You can create personal playlists
- You can download specific playlists to listen to offline
- Consistent use in just 10-minute chunks is proven to support achievement right up to a grade 9
- Each pod has a subject expert reading and explaining everything clearly and precisely. The pods include facts, quotes, keywords and annotated diagrams on screen.
- You can complete 'check and challenge' activities which will quiz you on the GCSE pods you have just watched. They will self-mark to give you instant feedback.

KNOWLEDGE ROUND-UP

Test your child on their Pod knowledge with some of these general questions



GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. What did you learn from watching the Pod?
 2. What will you remember?
 3. Tell me 3 key words you have learned from the Pod.
 4. Tell me everything you know on the topic.
 5. How confident do you feel on the subject?
 6. Do you think you need to learn more on that subject?
 7. What part of the Pod interested you the most?
 8. What was your favourite part of the Pod?
 9. Teach me what you've learned
 10. Where you surprised by what you've learned?
 11. What was your least favourite part?
-

TIP

Print out this page, take it everywhere you go and ask questions when you're in the supermarket, in the car, cooking dinner...

TIP

Think of some specific questions on other subjects, like photosynthesis, algebra or WWII

HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD USING GCSEPOD



What is GCSEPod?

GCSEPod is an award-winning expert in subject knowledge. We provide 3-5 minute bursts of audio-visual, teacher written learning which can help to reinforce and consolidate key GCSE topics covered in lessons. Experts read and explain everything clearly including all the right facts, quotes, keywords, dates and diagrams on screen.

Tips and Tricks

Watch online or offline

Ask your child to download Pods to their mobile device so they can learn on the go!

Favourites

Challenge your child to 'favourite' 10 Pods on topics they find difficult.

Watch the Pods together and use one of our other suggested learning techniques to help simplify what it is they're struggling

Personalised Playlists

Use the My Playlists area to create bespoke playlists.

Having personalised playlists means your child has fast access to Pods that will help fill knowledge gaps.

Support Homework

GCSEPod isn't just for revision. It's to help expand your child's subject knowledge.

If your child is struggling with a piece of homework, you can search for the topic on GCSEPod and use the Pods as an additional resource.

Memory Cards

Watch Pods together and then write down key facts, dates, diagrams and quotes.

Test their knowledge to see how much they remember.

Check & Challenge

Use our unique Check & Challenge feature to challenge your child to win at least 10 diamonds for each C&C they complete.

See if they can beat their previous score each time!

Logging in to GCSEpod

1. Go to www.gcsepod.com.
2. Click on login.
3. At the login screen, select 'Sign In with Office 365'.



4. Enter TCS student username and password.



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Contact Us

To help you understand our school communication procedure, please refer to the flow charts below for who to contact for different enquiries.

Pastoral: pastoral@testbourne.school



SEND: send@testbourne.school



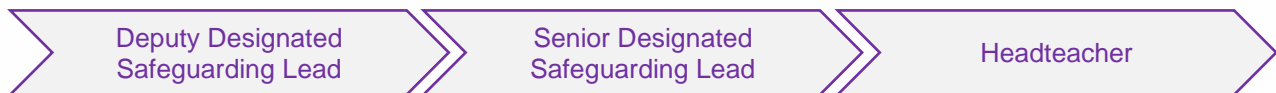
Curriculum: curriculum@testbourne.school



Administration: admin@testbourne.school



Safeguarding: staysafe@testbourne.school



We welcome any general feedback about our school at admin@testbourne.school

“Students act with integrity; achieve excellence together; enjoy and value their education; feel and demonstrate respect for themselves and others and become highly skilled learners prepared for a successful future.”