

# THE BURTON BOROUGH SCHOOL

A Specialist Arts College



Examinations Guide for parents

## Introduction

This Year your child will be sitting important public exams, which are stressful for students and probably even more for their parents.

This leaflet has been designed to give you some advice on how you can help your child achieve their best.

It is not easy to watch your children suffer and not to know what you can do to help.



The students who do best in exams;

- have revised thoroughly and carefully
- feel confident
- have parents who take an interest in their revision.

Please keep this Guide safe, as it will be required over the next two years.

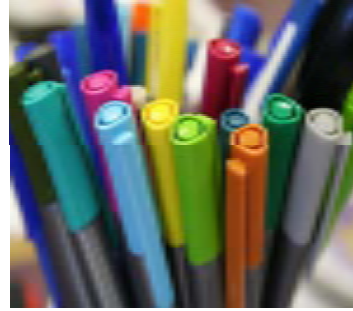
Please remember that copies of all the Exams Documentation/Calendars mentioned in this guide (including this guide!) can be found on the Schools website.

If you have any questions regarding exams, however small, please contact Clare White, the Exams Officer.

## Before the Exams

At the start of the exam season your child will be sent/given a statement of entry to check and sign. This will tell you and your child exactly which examinations they have been entered for.

Check it carefully for exam clashes, correct subjects and correct tier of entry. If you are at all unsure please ask - it is much better to sort out problems at this stage, rather than on the day of exam!



Later on the final statement of entry will be sent to you showing any changes (if applicable) together with a timetable showing rooms and exact times.

Read through the 'JCQ Notice to Candidates' and the 'Regulations and Guidance for Examinations - Instructions to Candidates' that have been sent to your child, this will give you lots of extra information

## Revision - so what can you do?

Do

- Offer help as a tester; as a reader; as a source of knowledge; as a buyer (of equipment, books, rewards)
- Make them feel you are on their side
- Organise non study activities for them
- Encourage them with praise and rewards
- Work out time limits with them - make sure they take breaks at least every 90 minutes.
- Make their environment revision friendly - somewhere quiet with good natural light - ensure any other children you have understand the importance of revision time
- Re-assure them that you are concerned about their welfare more than the results.

Do not

- Force them to revise in ways you think best
- Get involved in their stress; don't shout back
- Make comparisons with other students or yourself at a younger age.
- Give them permission to do badly
- Believe the revision lies.

## Five lies they may tell you about revision.

1. It's too early to start yet. It isn't. The most effective revision starts early and continues at a reasonable pace
2. It's too late to start now. It's never too late to start. Better to start early but better late than never
3. No-one else has started revising. Yes they have. They just aren't telling you. And if afterwards they tell you they got an 'A' without revision they're just boasting about how clever they are.
4. You can't revise for...(English, Maths, RE, ICT etc, etc). Yes you can. There's always something to do; some way of helping you understand or know more
5. You don't need to do well in... (English. Drama, RE, ICT etc). Employers and Universities prefer to see consistent results. An odd 'D' or 'E' suggests someone who is inclined to work hard only if they feel like it.
6. Revision is boring because it's just sitting staring at a book. No, it isn't. The best revision is active lively and varied.
7. I can revise and listen to music/watch the television at the same time. Not if it requires concentration.



## Revision timetable

Help your child to write a revision timetable.

Use their statement of entry/exam timetable to help you plan it.

Some students feel happy working to a set timetable, setting themselves clear goals, knowing what they will achieve by when. It should look something like this:

Date	Subjects	Times	To be done	Check
8/5/09	Physics	4.00-4.30	Three exam questions	/
	English	4.45-5.30	Read 12 <sup>th</sup> Night Act 1-3	/
	RE	5.45-6.00	Learn 5 key quotations	/
	Biology	7.00-8.00	Make notes - Circulation	/
	French	8.30-9.00	Revise traffic & camping	/

Not all students like to make a timetable before they start. They feel a timetable is too constraining and takes the fun out of what they intend to do. They prefer to make a list of what they have done and then look back at it from time to time to see what needs to be done next.

## Time Management

Some quotations

- Some is better than none; a lot is better than too much.
- It is unwise to do too much on one day and none on another.
- Your concentration span is constantly changing. It depends on the time of day, what you're doing and what you've done before. Half an hour is an accepted average before you need a change of activity. Sometimes it's ten minutes, sometimes three hours.
- Students should have one day a week free from revision, as long as they work eight hour days the rest of the week.
- Breaks are essential, even a short 20 minute break every 90 minutes will refresh your child's mind.
- Walking, the sea and fresh air are good for the brain. Students always forget that.



## Active Learning

Variety, novelty and activity are the friends of the reviser. They keep the brain alert and fend off the worst enemy; stress-induced boredom.

Sitting reading and rereading a book or a note book is often the worst form of revision; the mind blurs, the pages drift together, anxiety about the exam takes over the mind. But too many students think it's the only revision that counts and so waste far too much time looking at pages instead of revising.

### Variety of Activity is Vital - Ten possible activities

1. Reduce everything you know on a topic to 500 words, then to 200, then to 50, then to 10. Write those ten on a card for the morning of the exam
2. Read one page in five (and a whole book in an hour) Read just the introductions and conclusion to chapters (and a whole book in an hour)
3. Use the internet or buy revision guides
4. Spend some time each day on note learning. It gets easier.
5. Watch BBC Bitesize
6. Do exam questions from past papers (for an hour or ten minutes or ...)
7. At the end of each day, write everything you have learned in very quick bullet points
8. Invent and learn mnemonics
9. Make mind maps, put them on your wall and and to them every day
10. Make flow charts, diagrams, graphs, drawings as well as notes.

## Environment and diet

A healthy diet, important always, becomes vital at times of pressure. Fresh vegetables, fruit and water are the most important. It is best to reduce sugar and fat. Fish is supposed to be good for the brain.

**Students need a place to revise which is quiet, calm and comfortable. Probably the most important is quiet**



## Managing stress

Exams are stressful. So is revision. There is a constant fear of being found out, of not being good enough, of opening an exam paper and finding you can't answer any of the questions. Some things parents can do to reduce stress.

- Encourage them. Point out what they're good at. Tell them daily what they do well. Make mention of past success, current success with revision, and success in previous exams.
- If you look at their work, do not point out their errors; point out what they've done well.
- Get them to invite their friends round. Shared revision makes it easier, makes it more fun.
- Every now and then do something together you've never done before: go to a theme park, try sailing...
- Don't join in the general anxiety; be a picture of serene confidence

## Parents

There is a great deal you can do. You can't revise for them and however much you'd like to, you can't take the exams for them, but you can be invaluable in making the exam process smooth, calm and successful.

## Exam Days

Have a copy of the timetable displayed somewhere in the house so you know when they have an exam

Make sure they are dressed in school uniform

Make sure they have the correct equipment they need for an exam

Make sure they have a bottle of water - in a clear plastic container with all labels removed.

Remind them to leave their mobile phone (or any other electronic devices) at home. It is against Exam Regulations to bring them into an exam room and can lead to disqualification.

Make sure they don't revise too late the night before.

Make sure they have set their alarm.

Make sure they eat breakfast - even if they don't feel like it, a little will help

Tell your exams officer of any family crisis that may affect your child's exam performance.

Tell your exams officer of any medical conditions, for example hay fever, that may affect your child's performance. There are special considerations for some conditions.

Leave a telephone number with the exams office we can contact you or your child on if the event that they do not turn up for an examination.



**YOU MUST CONTACT THE EXAMS OFFICE IMMEDIATELY IF YOUR SON/DAUGHTER CANNOT ATTEND AN EXAMINATION - AND REMEMBER MEDICAL PROOF WILL BE REQUIRED BY THE EXAMINATION BOARD IF YOU REQUIRE SPECIAL CONSIDERATION**

## Useful Websites

### Subject Specific

[www.gcse.com/coursework.htm](http://www.gcse.com/coursework.htm)  
[www.schoolshistory.org.uk/coursework.htm](http://www.schoolshistory.org.uk/coursework.htm)  
[www.school-resources.co.uk/coursework\\_advice.htm](http://www.school-resources.co.uk/coursework_advice.htm)  
[www.technologystudent.com](http://www.technologystudent.com)  
[www.languagesonline.org.uk](http://www.languagesonline.org.uk)  
[www.creative-chemistry.org.uk](http://www.creative-chemistry.org.uk)  
[www.wpbschoolhouse.btinternet.co.uk](http://www.wpbschoolhouse.btinternet.co.uk)  
<http://www.schoolscience.co.uk>  
<http://www.activescience-gsk.com/home.cfm?init=1>  
<http://www.creative-chemistry.org.uk>  
<http://www.englishbiz.co.uk/>

### General: (These include general revision tips and specific subject help).

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/>  
<http://www.gcse.com/>  
<http://www.s-cool.co.uk/>  
<http://www.channel4.com/learning/>  
<http://www.schoolsnet.com/>

### How to Study:

<http://www.how-to-study.com/>

### For parents:

[http://www.ocr.org.uk/learners/parents\\_guide.html](http://www.ocr.org.uk/learners/parents_guide.html)