

Advice for Parents of AS and A2 pupils

Making the change from GCSE

Your child will be more likely to succeed if at AS and A2 if they try to do the following things:

- Form good relationships with other pupils and with staff
- Take a positive attitude towards study
- Get themselves organised for study
- Listen carefully inside and outside class
- Use library study and private study opportunities in school productively
- Take a careful and positive attitude to research
- Spend on average one and a half hours every day on work at home
- Read as much as they can
- Work hard on their numeracy skills
- Work hard on their ICT skills – even if they have not chosen to do ICT
- Be open to new ways of revising
- Learn to bounce back after setbacks

What is the difference from GCSE?

At AS and A2 Level, some important changes take place:

- Your child will get fewer subjects, but have to learn them in a lot more detail. Your child will have more periods a week of AS and A2 subjects than they did of the same subjects at GCSE
 - **7** periods for AS
 - **8** periods for A2
- Your child gets the chance to study on your own in school, in library and private study periods. It should be remembered that library and private study periods merely give your child the chance to get some of their work done in school. They do not remove the need to do homework. This study time is every bit as important as class time, and must not be frittered away by wasteful activities such as talking
 - **Library periods** give your child the chance to work on tasks and homeworks set in class in the school library. Your child will also have access to computers there
 - **Private study periods** give your child the chance to work on tasks and homeworks inside their teacher's classroom while he/she is taking another class. They also give your child the opportunity to ask the teacher questions about their work. For each subject, your child should have 2 periods of private study a week

- Your child will be required to do more research. This may be online or paper research. Your child must not expect to be given all he/she needs by the teacher – he/she will have to find information out for themselves as well.
- Your child will be expected to think more for themselves. Whereas at GCSE Level, pupils can do well purely by learning off their information, at AS and (even more so) at A Level, they will be expected to apply information they know, and think it through. So knowledge is part of good learning, but not certainly not all of it!

How your child's skills develop at AS and A2 Level

Organisation and Planning

Good organisation and planning are vital for success at AS and A2 Level. By the time your child is studying to AS Level, he/she will have more social commitments and perhaps a part-time job. By the time he/she is studying to A2 Level, he/she will need to keep up with the UCAS process in order to gain access to the university course of his/her choice. Prioritising tasks and managing his/her time becomes all-important. Guidance will be provided on how to do this.

Active Listening

Since at university level, lecturers rarely pause to repeat information, it is important that (in preparation for this) your child becomes used to taking down notes as he/she hears the information and does not wait to be told to write them down. Therefore, free note taking is a skill your child will develop at AS and A2 Level.

Extended Writing and Thinking

At AS and A2 Level, your child will be expected not just to know their information, but to be able to apply it in a logical way. Therefore, it is important not just to know information, but to think it through. Learning how to think out answers is one of the biggest challenges of AS and A2 study.

Just as GCSE study requires longer written answers, this is even more the case in many subjects at AS and A2 Level. Once again, your child will need to work out their answers. He/she will be given structured guidance on how to think out and plan longer written answers in the subjects which require this.

Research

In many subjects, good research skills (both online and paper research) will be expected of your child. Research becomes important at AS and A2 Level, not just for coursework, but for topics covered for external examinations.

Revision

Your child will reinforce and refine the revision skills they learned at GCSE. Once again, it will be important to remember the key principles of revision and be ready to use a range of revision strategies.

Practice in examination past papers will be crucial for success. Your child will sometimes be expected to access past papers for himself/herself from the NICCEA at www.ccea.org.uk.

FAQs

1. How much homework should my child have?
Your child should be doing on average five hours of revision a week. They should balance their time around all the subjects they do, and not simply focus on one or two
2. Is it OK for my child to have a phone on while doing their homework?
In some circumstances it will be justifiable for your child to have their phone on. For example, they may need to reference information or may need to keep up to date with information from their teacher via social networking sites such as Twitter. However, it is important to check that they are using their phone for valid reasons
3. How do I find out more about what my child is studying/what my child needs to do?
The best way of doing that is through the school website (www.lurgancollege.co.uk) or departmental websites linked to the school website. For examination information, the best source is the NICCEA website on www.ccea.org.uk
4. Is it OK to help my child with their homework?
5. ***We aim to make your child into an independent learner. This means he/she should be able to carry out tasks himself/herself, using the support that we provide. It would be useful to encourage them to use this support (e.g. through Twitter or departmental websites). At this level, your child should not need your help other than in exceptional circumstances. If they do require further help, they should speak to their teacher.***

For further advice on this, please contact the school on 02838322083