



Science Specialist School



A Leading Edge School

Ref: 11-12-013

23 September 2011

TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS OF YEAR 10 PUPILS

Dear Parent/Guardian

Controlled Assessments

As I explained to those of you who were able to attend the Key Stage 4 evening, the introduction of new syllabuses has now been completed for all GCSE subjects.

The main difference that you will notice is that Coursework has been replaced by Controlled Assessment. The Department for Education (DfE) has specified that Mathematics and Religious Studies should be 100% examination. In all other GCSE subjects, pupils will be undertaking Controlled Assessments. In Geography, History, Science subjects (Science, Additional Science, Biology, Chemistry and Physics) and Statistics these Controlled Assessments will account for 25% of the final mark and in Art, Art Textiles, Catering, Citizenship, Drama, English Language, English Literature, Graphic Communications, Media Studies, Music, MFL Subjects (French, German and Spanish), PE and Resistant Materials - 60%. All pupils taking ICT are now taking the Functional Skills route which is 100% examination.

In many ways the Controlled Assessments are similar to Coursework. However, the DfE has put in place a set of clear regulations and controls to ensure that all pupils are working under the same conditions and to minimise the opportunity for malpractice. The rules arising from these are published by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) on behalf of all the Examining Boards. The main points you should be aware of are:

- For most subjects the assessment must be done in school, although in some subjects the preliminary work can be done partly as homework
- In many subjects the assessment must take place under formal supervision with pupils working on their own in silence. In all subjects the level of control is clearly specified
- The number of hours spent on the assessment and/or the number of words required is specified and Access Arrangements (ie extra time, scribe, reader, etc) apply
- The tasks are closely defined by the Examination Boards and are time limited so the same task cannot be taken time and time again over many years
- Candidates cannot draft their work, have it marked, receive detailed feedback of the type "in order to get a B you must do" and then redraft or upgrade the work unless drafting is a skill specifically being addressed. The regulations state that teachers may only provide advice at a general level. Even when drafting is being assessed teachers "must not provide detailed and specific advice on how the draft could be improved to meet the assessment criteria"
- Many syllabuses give clear guidance as to the level of help that can be given in preparation for the assessment and the regulations state that "writing frames cannot be given by the teacher". Where pupils use ICT to carry out their assessment they will use special logins and saving arrangements to ensure that they can only access their work in the specified assessment time.

Accompanying this letter is a timetable and brief details of the Controlled Assessments that will be undertaken during Year 10. There is a version by subject and a version by date. The dates for assessments to be undertaken during Year 11 (2012-13) will follow later in the year. Please can you study them closely as it is important that pupils are in school when the assessments are taking place. In many subjects the lessons preceding the assessment will cover essential preparation for the assessment and your son/daughter will be disadvantaged if they miss this work. Obviously, if a candidate is too ill to attend school, staff will make every effort to arrange supervised sessions for them to complete the work but this will only be possible for unavoidable absence.

The JCQ have prepared guidance for candidates undertaking Controlled Assessments and this will be issued to all Year 10 pupils in the Autumn Term 2011. We ask that you go through these documents carefully with your son/daughter to ensure that they fully understand the regulations.

Pupils following BTEC courses will be producing portfolios of work throughout the course and these are also covered by the JCQ guidance. The BTEC cannot be awarded unless every assignment has been completed to a 'pass' standard.

Similarly CIDA and AIDA are awarded on tasks carried out in school as is Music Technology. All such work is moderated both internally and externally.

I hope that this will help you to support your son/daughter throughout their Key Stage 4 course. Please do not hesitate to contact me at school if you need any further information. If your son/daughter has any concerns about a controlled assessment they should discuss it with their subject teacher in the first instance.

Yours sincerely

Mrs M Greenway
Controlled Assessments Coordinator