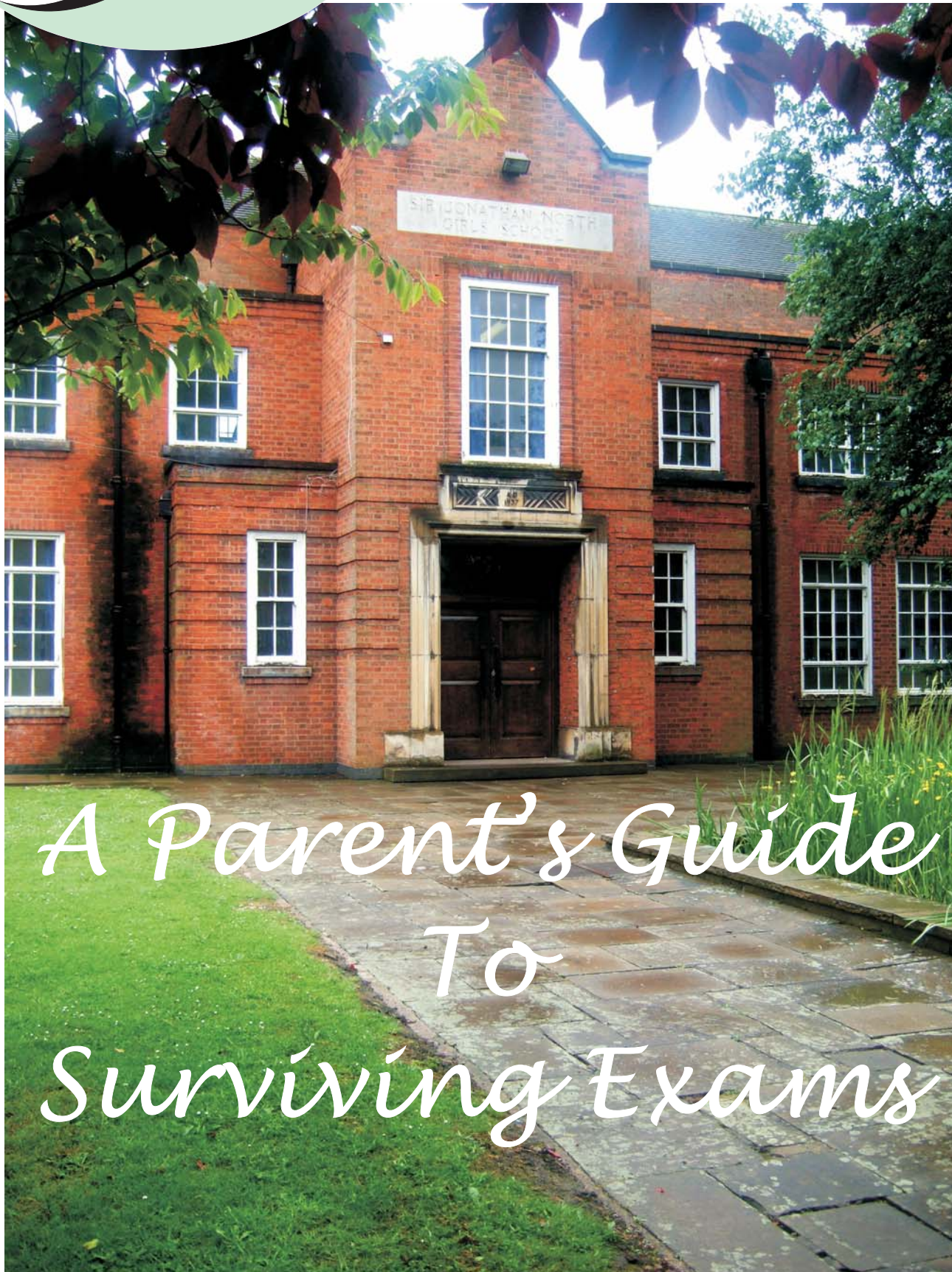
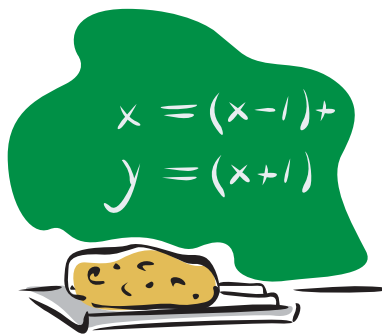


SJN
Community College



*A Parent's Guide
To
Surviving Exams*



A PARENT'S GUIDE TO SURVIVING EXAMS

Your daughter is preparing for her GCSE examinations in May and June of Year 11 and **you** really can make a difference by supporting her through what can, for many students, be a difficult and stressful time.

In Year 11, she will be completing coursework for some exam subjects, still working through the syllabus and then, nearer the exams, revising in lessons by going through past exam papers and going over aspects of the work she finds difficult. She should also be working at home. Stress levels can rise and there may be times when you feel that you are sitting the exams rather than her, but your help and support through this year will prove invaluable!



HOW YOU CAN HELP NOW

Encourage your daughter to complete her coursework on time.

Coursework counts and can make a huge difference to a student's final grade.

For example, coursework in English is 40% of the final mark.

In some subjects coursework counts for as much as 60% of the marks.

If your daughter gets coursework in on time, she may get some feedback from her teacher on how it could be improved. If it isn't handed in on time, you will probably receive a letter to let you know, so encourage your daughter to get it finished and speak to the teacher, so your daughter can see you are working with us to help her. Your daughter has a booklet giving the deadlines for coursework and should be using it to plan ahead.

Urge her not to leave everything to the last minute. She will panic, probably rush it and do less well because she is under pressure. Coursework deadlines vary according to the subject, but the final deadline is in the booklet.

Check she is doing her homework

If she says she doesn't have any (this is unlikely!), check when you sign her planner each week. Suggest she does some revision instead. It is never too early to start!



Make sure she is at College every day and on time

Some parents wrongly believe that once their daughter is 16, they are no longer responsible for ensuring she attends and is on time.

The Education Welfare Service monitors students' attendance carefully right up to the end of Year 11 and may decide to take legal action if attendance is poor.

Students whose attendance is poor do not perform well in their GCSE examinations. For every 17 days missed they drop one grade in every subject, according to Dfes research.



Ensure the balance of work and play is right!

Too much work leads to stress,

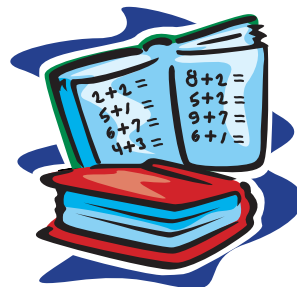
too much play leads to missed deadlines, no revision and disappointing grades.

A balance is essential!

Getting enough sleep is also vital. Talking on MSN till 2am is not helpful!!!

MOCK EXAMS

Mock exams go on throughout the year but the majority are held during the last part of November, running into December, and are a chance for your daughter to learn how to work under timed conditions, where she makes mistakes and where her areas of weakness are. Predicted grades are based on mock exam results and the teacher's knowledge of your daughter's work and her likely progress in the months leading up to the exams. These grades are the ones which go on your daughter's 16+ form, and which the Colleges consider for admission to their courses post 16. If your daughter's grades are disappointing, encourage her to talk to her teachers and start working on the subjects where she needs to improve. Reassure her that lots of girls don't do as well as they'd expected at this point, but work hard and consequently do well in the final exams.



PREPARATION FOR THE REAL THING

Your daughter will receive her exam timetable during the Spring term and will also be given a blank revision timetable, so she can plan her revision up to the exams. The dates of the exams should be filled in and revision planned around them. You can also download a revision timetable from www.standards.dfes.gov.uk if your daughter really wants to plan ahead!

TIPS TO HELP YOUR DAUGHTER REVISE EFFECTIVELY



- ★ Ensure she has somewhere to study
- ★ Encourage her to keep her books and notes organised
- ★ Make sure she eats properly and drinks plenty of water. The brain works better when the body is fed and watered!
- ★ Sessions should last no longer than half an hour or an hour at most, and then a short break before starting another subject
- ★ No more than two subjects a night
- ★ Plan to revise specific topics in each subject, not everything at once
- ★ Start each session by tackling the most difficult bits first
- ★ Revisit each subject several times
- ★ Encourage your daughter to use the revision methods she has been taught - mind maps, brief notes, pictures, spider diagrams. Just reading things through doesn't usually work! The more she processes information, the more likely it is to stick!
- ★ Televisions and loud music do not help revision, but quiet background music might
- ★ Working with a friend can help because it allows them to test each other and talk about the work
- ★ Revision guides are very useful. Your daughter will be able to get some from College. Others can be bought from bookshops like Waterstones or WH Smith. Teachers can advise which ones are best.
- ★ There are also good revision websites such as BBC Bitesize at www.bbc.co.uk/education/revision.
- ★ Some revision materials, provided by the College, are available on line, and can be accessed from home
- ★ Check how she is doing by letting her explain something to you if you can understand the explanation, then she will be able to produce a good answer in the exam.
- ★ Try to be positive and reassuring to build her confidence



WHEN THE ACTUAL EXAMS ARRIVE



- ★ Make sure your daughter continues to attend lessons up to the examination in each subject
- ★ Give your daughter time for revision before and between exams, by not asking her to do too much babysitting or housework (When they are over, she can make up for it!)
- ★ Encourage the rest of the family to give her space and peace while she works
- ★ Emphasise the need for plenty of sleep, especially the night before an exam
- ★ Don't let her work herself into a state of exhaustion - encourage her to take regular breaks
- ★ Ask her to put her social life on hold. She and her friends can celebrate when it is all over!
- ★

ON THE DAY OF AN EXAM...



Ensure she gets up on time and is in College **at least 20 minutes** before the exam is due to start

Ask if she has everything she needs

1. Pens(black) and sharpened pencils
2. A rubber and a ruler
3. A watch
4. Maths exams may require a calculator and a protractor
5. Most examinations take place in the Sports Hall, which can be very cold or very hot, depending on the weather. Appropriate clothing is essential
6. A small bottle of water (minus the label!) can be useful in the exam if it is very hot



Tell her to switch her mobile phone off and leave it off until after the exam, or better still, leave it at home

Wish her good luck as she leaves!





WHAT WE DO

In addition to the teaching in lessons, which continues up to the day of the exam, we

- ★ Run structured revision programmes. Faculties will usually organise these, often at lunchtimes and after school.
- ★ Run a series of Study Skills workshops to help your daughter revise effectively
- ★ Target students who have been identified as having particular needs
- ★ Run “Coursework Catch up” sessions some lunchtimes and after school, which are organised by the Learning Mentors
- ★ Ask subject staff to be available to discuss problems with individuals



There are a team of people who are here to help your daughter through the year.

Head of Year/Assistant Principal in charge of Transition:

Vice Principal in Key Stage 4:

Student Support Manager:

Examinations Officer:

Student Support Officers:

Mrs Wyatt

Mrs Raynes

Mrs Mason

Mrs Broughton

Mrs George

If you have a question or concern, the College telephone number is 0116 2708116.
If the member of staff is unavailable when you phone, the office will take a message.

And, when exams are a distant memory,
we look forward to seeing you at Achievement
Evening to recognise your daughter’s success.





Sir Jonathan North Community College
Knighton Lane East
Leicester