

# Ballyclare Secondary School



## A Guide to Key Stage 4 Studies

**2024**

# A Guide for Parents/Carers



It is an exciting time for your child as they commence their Key Stage 4 studies. They are now taking subjects they have chosen, and which will play a part in shaping their future career options.

However, the progression from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4 also brings its challenges as we navigate the course content, controlled assessment deadlines and module exams.

In Ballyclare Secondary School, we believe we are a team who work together to ensure our young people reach their potential, becoming everything they can be and fulfilling their dreams and aspirations. This booklet is aimed to provide you, as parents and carers with support and guidance as we begin the next stage of your child's journey.

Much of what follows is common sense and you will probably already be doing most of the things we suggest. We have also included some more detailed information on course requirements and assessment.

## What does good studying look like?

Good studying is about quality not quantity. Pupils are encouraged to regularly review the work they have completed in class. When reviewing their work, they should be actively using their brains and not just reading over their notes. Conversely, making 'revision notes' should not simply involve copying from notes or a textbook.

To be studying effectively your child should be doing something with the information in their notes. Ideas they might try are:

- Reducing sections of information into concise key points;
- Presenting information in different ways, e.g. condensing sections of text into bullet points, flow diagrams or mind maps;
- Use memory tools such as mnemonics, colour coding, grouping similar ideas or prioritising ideas;

- Your child could teach you about a topic they have been studying; teaching someone else is a very effective way to ensure understanding.

In short, effective studying requires students to be active with the information they have been taught in class. This will look different for different pupils as we all learn in different ways. As long, as your child is 'doing' something with the information that requires them to use their brains, they will learn more effectively.

This review of work should be ongoing and not left until very close to the exam period.

Exam revision should be started well in advance, both to ensure it is effective and to ease the stress of last-minute cramming.

## **Portfolio assessed subjects**

Some of the subjects your child is studying may be largely or wholly assessed by the production of a portfolio of their work.

As these subjects are assessed in a different way, the following points are important to remember:

- Be organised and plan how to complete work for the deadlines set by teachers. There is a lot of ongoing coursework in these subjects and if deadlines are missed it can become very difficult to catch up.
- If a pupil is absent, they need to ensure they speak to their teacher to find out what they have missed and how to best catch up.
- Good attendance is vital in these subjects as a significant amount of work can be missed in a relatively short time.

# Effective revision – a guide for students

The following points are helpful for revision:

## ✓ ***Be organised***

- Create a timetable.
- Display the timetable where it is visible.
- The timetable will ensure that all areas are being covered and break up the task of studying into manageable chunks.
- Plan to revise only one or two subjects in an evening.
- Plan to revise specific topics in each subject, not everything at once.
- Plan to cover each topic several times, revisiting as you get closer to the exam.

## ✓ ***Effective revision sessions***

- The carrot philosophy – plan a 30 minute or 1 hour revision session followed by something you love to do at the end.
- Have all the books and equipment you need at the start of your revision session.
- Tackle the bits you find most difficult at the start.
- Leave your mobile phone in a different room – it is really difficult to ignore the ping of notifications and you will end up wasting time scrolling through Instagram or TikTok.
- Reading over your notes is not an effective way to revise, neither is copying all your notes out again – make sure you are using your brain to process the information you are working on.
- Use a variety of resources to help, e.g. class notes, revision websites, revision guides, videos.

## ✓ ***Maintaining your well-being***

There is no doubt that exams are stressful but there are things you can do to help ease the anxiety you may feel.

- Have a positive attitude; enjoy what you are learning about and feel a sense of pride when you master something you find difficult.
- Do not leave your revision to the last minute.
- Eat a balanced diet and drink plenty of water.
- Get enough sleep.
- Get some physical exercise and fresh air every day.
- Plan study sessions with friends.
- Spend some time away from the books doing things you love.

## How can parents/carers help?

### ✓ *During revision*

- Encourage the whole family to be supportive.
- Make sure there is a quiet space to study.
- Remove distractions such as mobile phones, television and music.
- Plan some relaxation time.
- Encourage your young person to continue to talk to their teachers; they should feel confident about asking for help.
- Emphasise the need to eat a balanced diet and drink plenty of water.
- Emphasise the need for plenty of sleep.
- Praise their hard work

### ✓ *During the exam period*

- Ensure you know the date and start time of each exam.
- Make sure your child gets to school in plenty of time for each exam.

- Ensure they have all the equipment needed to complete their exam, e.g. some pens (black biro), sharp pencils, rubber, ruler, calculator, protractor etc.
- Encourage good diet, exercise and sleep patterns.
- If possible be around before and after exams to wish them well and find out how it went.
- Don't allow them to reflect too deeply on the exams they have taken.
- When it is over, encourage them to relax and forget about their exams. Tell them how proud you are.

The link below takes you to a webinar by Kate Jones which provides some excellent guidance on effective studying.

[Effective Study Strategies: Webinar for parents and carers](#)

## Completing the Exam

**Read the question carefully and do what it says!**

**Leave yourself enough time to complete all questions**

### ***Command words***

When helping your child with their revision, it is important to remember the different styles of questions that can be asked. Each question has a command word which tell the pupil how to answer.

A list of common command words is given below:

<b>Command</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<b>Assess</b>	'Weigh up' a statement, showing arguments in favour and against
<b>Analyse</b>	Separate information into components and identify their characteristics. Discuss the pros and cons of a topic or argument and make reasoned comments
<b>Compare and contrast</b>	Show the similarities and differences
<b>Conclude</b>	Make a decision after reasoning something out
<b>Define</b>	Give the meaning of
<b>Describe</b>	Give a detailed account of/what is happening
<b>Differentiate</b>	Explore and explain the differences
<b>Discuss</b>	Explore the subject by looking at the advantages and disadvantages
<b>Explain</b>	Describe, giving reasons and causes
<b>Evaluate</b>	Give an opinion by exploring the good and bad points
<b>Identify</b>	Recognise or prove something as being certain
<b>Illustrate</b>	Show by explaining and giving examples
<b>Interpret</b>	Explain the meaning by using examples and opinions
<b>Justify</b>	Give good reasons for offering an opinion or reaching a conclusion
<b>Outline</b>	Concentrate on the main points of the topic or item
<b>Summarise</b>	Give the main points of an idea or argument. Leave out unnecessary details

### ***Non-written responses, graphs and diagrams***

Not all questions require a written answer. You might have to label a diagram or circle or tick the correct answer.

Other questions will require you to show your maths skills, graph skills or your ability to illustrate your understanding using diagrams.

Tips for these type of questions:

- Always read every word on the paper to ensure you do not miss questions out.
- Do what the question tells you; if you are asked to tick three boxes, make sure you tick three.

- Do not skim over diagrams and tables when revising.
- Make sure you have all the equipment you might need for this sort of question; if in doubt about what you will need, check with your teacher.
- Remember the rules for drawing graphs and tables etc.
- When drawing graphs or diagrams be accurate; remember all the instructions your teacher will have given you for doing this properly.

### ***Calculations***

In many subjects there will be calculations to complete. Make sure you always show your working out. Working out should clearly show what you are doing, it's not just random numbers on the page. If you get the wrong answer and have no working out, you will automatically get zero marks for that question.

### ***Longer/Essay Questions***

- ✓ Read the question carefully.
- ✓ If possible, break it into smaller chunks.
- ✓ Think about what you are going to write before you start.
- ✓ Refer back to the original question to check you have covered all of the points.
- ✓ Read over your answer to check for accuracy, spelling, punctuation and grammar.



# Useful Websites

There are many websites which provide useful information as your child commences KS4 study:

## ***Examination Boards***

<https://ccea.org.uk/>

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/>

<https://www.wjec.co.uk/>

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/home.html>

<https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/>

## ***Exam Regulations***

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/>

## ***General Revision***

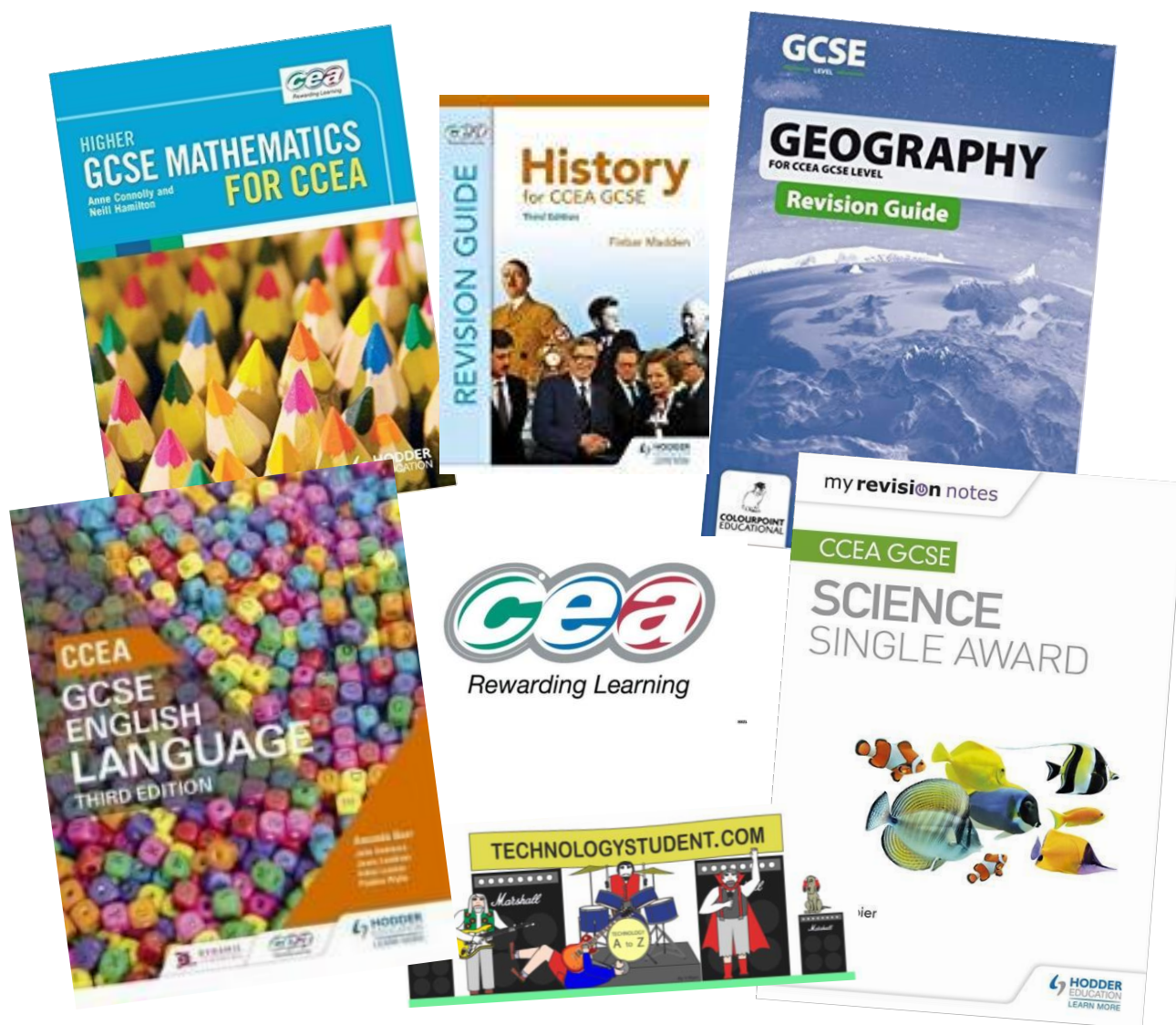
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize>

<http://www.revisionworld.co.uk>

<https://www.examtime.com/gcse/resources/>

## Revision Guides

There are a range of revision guides available for most courses. We do not believe it is necessary to buy all of these. However, if you think your child would benefit from a revision guide for any subject please ensure you purchase the book for the correct examination board. If in doubt, please check with your child's teacher before you buy.



# Year 11 External Exam Schedule 2024-2025

Date	Subject (CCEA)	Time
12 <sup>th</sup> November 2024	DAS: Chemistry Unit 1	9.00 – 10.00 am
<b>6<sup>th</sup> February 2025</b>	<b>November results issued</b>	
27 <sup>th</sup> February 2025	SAS: Chemistry Unit 2	9.00 – 10.00 am
28 <sup>th</sup> February 2025	DAS: Physics Unit 1	9.00 – 10.00 am
<b>17<sup>th</sup> April 2025</b>	<b>February results issued</b>	
<b>6<sup>th</sup> May: GCSE Modules start</b>		
Date TBC	BTEC Sport onscreen exam	TBC
6 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	LLW Unit 1	1:00 – 2:00 pm
9 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	LLW Unit 2	9:00 -10:00 am
12 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	English Literature Unit 1	9.00 – 10.45 am
13 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	DAS Biology Unit 1	1:00 – 2:00 pm
14 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	Geography Unit 1	9:00 – 10:30 am
15 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	Maths Unit 1-2 Maths Unit 3-4	9.00 – 10.45 am 9.00 – 11.00 am
19 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	SAS Chemistry Unit 2 (re-sit)	9:00 -10:00 am
21 <sup>st</sup> May 2025	Religious Studies Unit 3	1.00 – 2.30 pm
19 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	Leisure Travel & Tourism Unit 1	1:00 – 2:30 pm
12 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	Further Maths Unit 1	1:00 – 3:00 pm
9 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	Business Studies Unit 1	1:00 – 2:30 pm
16 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	History Unit 1	9.00 – 10.45 am
28 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	Agriculture and Land Use Unit 1	1:00 – 2:15 pm
7 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	English Language Unit 1	9.00 – 10.45 am
22 <sup>nd</sup> May 2025	DAS Physics Unit 1 (re-sit)	9:00 -10:00 am
29 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	Technology & Design Unit 1	1:00 – 2:30 pm
6 <sup>th</sup> June 2025	Child Development Unit 1	9:00 – 10:15 am
16 <sup>th</sup> June 2025	Agriculture and Land Use Unit 2	1:00 – 2:15 pm
<b>21<sup>st</sup> August 2025</b>	<b>Summer results issued</b>	

Prior to each exam series, your child will receive an exam timetable. This gives the date and time for each exam your child will sit in that series.

# Year 11 Assessment Schedule 2023-2024

Subject & Examining Board	Controlled Assessment (CA)	CA %	Curriculum Timing	Task Setting Control Level	External Exams	GCSE %	Yr 11 Percentage Completed
Agriculture and Land Use CCEA	n/a in Year 11				Unit 1 Unit 2	25% 25%	50%
Art & Design CCEA	n/a in Year 11				All exams in Year 12		0%
BTEC Sport Level 2 Pearson Edexcel	Unit 5				Online exam for Unit 1		50%
Business Communication Systems CCEA	n/a in Year 11				Unit 2 The Business Environment		35%
Business & Services CCEA (Occupational Studies)	Level 1 Using Office Technology	50%	Sept - May	Medium	None for this subject		50%
Business Studies CCEA	n/a in year 11				Unit 1 Business Start Up	40%	40%
Child Development CCEA	n/a in Year 11				Unit 1	30%	30%
Carpentry & Joinery CCEA (Occupational Studies)	Level 1 Health & Safety Practical/Workshop Task Evaluation	50%	Sept - May	Medium	None for this subject		50%

Subject & Examining Board	Controlled Assessment (CA)	CA %	Curriculum Timing	Task Setting Control Level	External Exams	GCSE %	Yr 11 Percentage Completed
Digital Technology CCEA	n/a in Year 11				Unit 1 Digital Technology		30%
Drama CCEA	Devised Performance	30%	Sept - May				30%
English Language CCEA	Unit 2 3 Speaking & Listening Tasks	20%	Throughout the year- best 3 selected in year 12	High	Unit 1 Writing for Purpose and Audience and Reading to Access Non-Fiction and Media Texts.	30%	60%
	Unit 3 Studying Written Language	10%	February				
English Literature CCEA	n/a in Year 11				Unit 1 The Study of Prose	30%	30%
Food & Nutrition CCEA	n/a in Year 11				All exams in Year 12		
Food Preparation CCEA (Occupational Studies)	Contemporary Cuisine	50%	Sept - May	Medium	None for this subject		50%
French CCEA	None				All exams in Year 12		
Further Maths CCEA	None				Further Maths Pure Module Unit 1	50%	50%
Geography CCEA	None				Unit 1 Understanding our Natural World	40%	40%

Subject & Examining Board	Controlled Assessment (CA)	CA %	Curriculum Timing	Task Setting Control Level	External Exams	GCSE %	Yr 11 Percentage Completed
Graphic Design CCEA (Occupational Studies)	Level 1 Graphic Design	50%	Sept - May	Medium	None for this subject		50%
History CCEA	None				Unit 1 <u>Section A: Option 1:</u> Life in Nazi_Germany, 1933–45 <u>Section B: Option 1:</u> Northern Ireland and its Neighbours	60%	60%
Horticulture CCEA (Occupational Studies)	Unit 49 Growing Plants in a Sustainable Way	50%	September - May	Medium	None for this subject		50%
Leisure, Travel & Tourism CCEA	Unit 3 working in the Leisure, Travel and Tourism Industry	20%	Summer term - to continue into Year 12	High	Unit 1 Understanding the Leisure, Travel and Tourism Industry	40%	40%
LLW CCEA	n/a in Year 11				Citizenship Personal Development	20% 20%	40%
Mathematics CCEA	None				M1/M2/M3/M4	45%	45%
Media Studies AQA	None				All exams in Year 12		
Motor Vehicle and Road User Studies CCEA	n/a in Year 11				All exams in Year 12		

Subject & Examining Board	Controlled Assessment (CA)	CA %	Curriculum Timing	Task Setting Control Level	External Exams	GCSE %	Yr 11 Percentage Completed
Music CCEA	Composition	15%	Sept - May	Medium	All exams in Year 12		15%
Physical Education AQA	None				All exams in Year 12		
Preparation for Adult Life CCEA (Level 2)	8 Units	60%	Sept - June	High	No exams		60%
Princes Trust	4 Units	57%	Sept - June	Medium	No exams		57%
Psychology Pearson Edexcel	n/a in Year 11				All exams in Year 12		
Religious Studies Full Course CCEA	None				Unit 3 The Revelation of God and The Christian Church	50%	50%
Science Single Award CCEA	None				Chemistry	25%	25%
Science Double Award CCEA	None				Biology 1 Chemistry 1 Physics 1	11% 11% 11%	58%
Technology & Design CCEA	n/a in Year 11				Unit 1	25%	25%

***All external exam results will be issued to candidates in August 2024***

## Criteria for Admission to Year 13

To gain entry to Sixth Form, students must:

- i. Achieve a minimum of 5 'C' grades at GCSE level, including at least a Grade C in English **and** Maths. Pupils may be admitted to Sixth Form if they have achieved a Grade C in Maths or English and are able to prove that the missing grade is imminently attainable (through remark or resit and supported by the relevant HOD).
- ii. A minimum of **8 points** from **5 GCSE grades (or equivalent)** calculated on the basis of GCSE results as follows:

A*	= 5 points
A	= 4 points
B	= 3 points
C*	= 2 points
C	= 1 point
- iii. Meet the essential criteria set out for each subject.\*
- iv. Choose and complete three subjects (or equivalent) over the two years.
- v. Have a history of good attendance, punctuality and behaviour.

*\*Subject specific criteria are detailed in the Year 13 Options Booklet that is published at the beginning of Year 12. As a rule of thumb, pupils should aim for at least a Grade B in subjects they wish to study at A-level.*