

Information for Parents: Sixth Form

In the Sixth Form the **workload** increases in terms of the size and quantity of assignments set, and there is a need for students to read around their subjects, to undertake their own research, make their own notes etc.

Academic coasting is not an option at A Level at CLS and students need to receive help in order to take the initiative and to be able to deal with work which requires both more time and more effort.

Time management becomes a huge issue in terms of being able to juggle deadlines and social life, prioritising work and planning ahead for revision.

The almost inevitable result of these new demands is increased **stress**, and students need acknowledge this and to develop ways of dealing with this.

Our aim in terms of study at CLS is to equip our pupils to deal with the exigencies of a degree course and working life; they need to become self organising, self motivating, and independent learners.

Much of the guidance necessary to achieve this comes from subject teachers and from the pastoral structure: Form Tutor, Deputy Heads of Sixth Form and Head of Sixth Form. However, in addition to this we run a programme of study skills support on the Student Day in January.

AT HOME

Often when their sons enter the Sixth Form parents can feel out of their depth in terms of the subjects he is studying and feel at a loss as to how to support him with their homework. This, combined with the desire to foster independence, can lead parents to back off altogether. There are, however some basic things that you can do at home to help:

Work habits

Encourage your son to work in a light airy uncluttered environment, with necessary equipment around him, room to display notes etc. Try to make him see that even as a Sixth Former, contrary to his opinion, distractions such as access to mobile phone, e-mail, i-pod, etc will not create an environment conducive to work. Classical music, of about 60 bpm and without lyrics - Baroque is ideal - helps to cut out background noise and can help to increase sub consciousness alpha waves, which foster effective learning. Sufficient sleep, drinking water and a balanced diet can also help the brain to function well.

Time Management

Discuss deadlines with your son and encourage him to display them somewhere at home. He should have short and long term plans and will benefit from discussing what work he has and when he is going to do it on a daily/weekly basis. Encourage him to plan his weeks, including leisure time, so that he has a clear idea of what time they have to work in (it's less than he will think).

Revision and Study Skills

Reading through work is not revision, so encourage your son to use a variety of learning techniques:

- Making notes in colour/on cards or post it notes
- Using diagrams
- Mind maps
- Recording information onto disk
- Doing different work in different rooms
- Discussion
- Group study
- Testing/self testing
- Teaching you a topic
- In general new work could be done in the morning and known work reviewed in the afternoon

We remember best if things are funny or bizarre, or have an emotional content. Rude mnemonics (within reason) are very helpful!

You will help your son learn if you encourage him to think about what he has learnt. Ask him questions about both the general and the particular (thus using the right and left brain). Although students often don't want to discuss work, it is worth persevering.

Stress

Study-related stress comes from students making demands on themselves which they feel are difficult to meet alone. They then feel alone and isolated and unwilling to confront problems. Help your son to identify what he finds stressful and to think about ways out of these situations. Encourage him to include regular relaxation and exercise in his weekly routine.