

Where to find out more

If you have any questions about coursework, or the coursework your child will be doing, speak to their teacher. The following websites may also be helpful:

- www.qca.org.uk – QCA's main website has information on qualifications, student guides to GCSEs and A levels and online versions of this guide.
- www.parentscentre.gov.uk – This DfES site has detailed information on helping your child learn and on what they will study at school.
- www.jcq.org.uk – The Joint Council for Qualifications has information on exam rules, plagiarism and appeals.
- www.accac.org.uk – ACCAC's website has information on examinations and assessments in Wales.

Your child will study qualifications from different exam boards. The website of each exam board contains information on the qualifications they offer:

AQA (Assessment and Qualifications Alliance) – www.aqa.org.uk

CCEA (Northern Ireland Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessments) – www.ccea.org.uk

Edexcel – www.edexcel.org.uk

OCR (Oxford and Cambridge and RSA examinations) – www.ocr.org.uk

WJEC (Welsh Joint Education Committee) – www.wjec.co.uk



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Coursework

A guide for parents



Coursework: a guide for parents

Do you have a son or daughter who is completing GCSEs or A levels?

If so, this leaflet is for you. It's about coursework: what it is and how you can help. It also sets out the rules that students must stick to.



What is coursework?

Coursework is research or projects that count towards a student's final grade. It includes extended essays, investigations, practical experiments or performance work. Coursework is an excellent way for students to demonstrate the skills and knowledge they have gained throughout a course. Coursework is done at home and in class. Students are encouraged to use research sources such as textbooks, encyclopaedias, journals, TV, radio and the internet.

What rules do students have to follow?

Coursework must be a student's own original work, and they will have to sign a declaration

saying that the work is their own. Teachers also have to sign the declaration, to say that the work is by the student. If your child's work is found not to be their own, your child could be disqualified from the qualifications they are taking.

How can I help my child?

You can encourage your child to spend time on their coursework, do it well, hand it in on time and stick to the rules. This, along with providing a quiet place to study, will help them to achieve their best.

How much can the teachers or I help?

Teachers can provide guidance on what should be included in coursework projects. They can also explain what they will be looking for when they are marking the project. But the teacher cannot tell students how to do the work – the point of coursework is for your son or daughter to work independently.

You can encourage your child to do well, discuss the project with them and provide access to resource materials. You must not put pen to paper – you must not help write the coursework.

Are students allowed to quote from library books or the internet?

Students can refer to research, quotations or evidence but they must list their sources. The sources could be anything – books, internet sites, television programmes.

Students must not plagiarise, copy or purchase essays or collude with anyone else. This is considered to be malpractice and could lead to your son or daughter being disqualified.

Encourage your child to use their own words as much as possible. If they do want to quote or refer to others' work, tell them to use quotation marks and references. By referencing their sources they will avoid allegations of malpractice.

How is malpractice detected?

Most coursework is marked by your son or daughter's teacher and then checked by the exam board. Since teachers are familiar with their students' work as well as the research on specific subjects, they will be able to tell if the student did not do the work or if the work was copied from another source.

Encourage your child to complete their work honestly and follow the rules. This will ensure that they receive the grade they deserve.

Finally....

Coursework takes time and effort, and because it counts towards your child's final grade it is important that they do as well as they can.

You can help by providing a quiet place to work, encouraging them to do their best and hand their work in on time.



What happens if a student breaks the rules?

There are a number of things that could happen. The relevant exam board decides which action is appropriate, but the student might receive no mark for the work, be disqualified from the whole qualification or part of it or be barred from entering a qualification with a particular exam board for a period of time.

What can I do if I think the coursework rules have been broken?

If you think there has been any form of malpractice speak to your child's teacher or a member of staff at their school or college. They will be able to tackle the situation and give advice on what will happen next.