



# Shire Oak Academy Sixth Form Handbook

## Your guide to study!







## Setting Goals

Setting your goals can be as simple as your final grades at the end of your A Level/BTEC courses. It helps to write down the grades you are hoping to achieve somewhere where you will be constantly reminded of them.

If you are interested in the subjects you are studying, it is more likely that you will put in the hours of study required. Try to link what you're learning to your own life-this may help to put it into context.





## Rewards

It is important to make sure you give yourself regular breaks when working or revising. Put a series of rewards in your programme to give you a break, and use them as an incentive to work hard, for example, an hour off to watch your favourite TV programme, or a break to listen to some music.

Why not celebrate finishing any major assignments, modules or exams; use this as an incentive to work hard. You could even arrange this for when you finish. For example, arranging a day out with friends, or even just giving yourself a day off from work.





## Track your progress

Throughout your courses, keep a record of all of your results you receive from tests, homework and assignments. You'll then be able to track your progress early, as areas you might be less confident in will be highlighted, and those that you are doing well in will hopefully give you that vital confidence boost.

Getting feedback from assignments and tests is also very useful to help you make improvements, and recognise where your strengths are. Don't take criticism personally-it's there to help and move you forward. Make sure you understand any comments given to you, and decide what the best course of action to take in response to the feedback.





## Time Management

Organising your time effectively is crucial to successful study. You need to establish a routine that works for you, but be flexible, as circumstances can change.

- Try to get an idea of what the course will involve, including deadlines, and how long you will have to complete units.
- Try to get a timetable organised, filling in when you will be studying, what you will be working on, when you will be having breaks, and what time you will be finishing work.
- Set up a diary/calendar on your phone note down all deadlines, homework tasks, exams and tests. Also enter key dates, such as UCAS dates, work experiences or trips.
- Try to go over your work at the end of a unit, making sure you understand the content covered
- You will need to be working more than the amount of work set, so for every hour you are in a subject, you need to be doing another hour outside of timetabled lessons.



- Use your diary to plan your time. Work out exactly how much time you need for work and set that aside each day. The remainder is your own time and it is important to rest and have fun.
- If you have a task that you are really not happy about doing, get it done as soon as you can, so it's out of the way. This may help you feel more at ease to know that it's done and dusted. It may help to break up large tasks into smaller, more manageable pieces of work. Don't leave the difficult tasks to the last minute- if you need assistance from staff, they won't appreciate an email the day before your deadline.

Remember why you're doing this work- Remind yourself every now and then!





## Avoid Procrastination

Whilst it is difficult to completely avoid all distractions, you can minimise them. Be aware of what is a potential distraction, and try to avoid it, for example:

- Television
- Music
- Social Media
- Phone/tablet

These can affect your ability to stay on task, and drain your energy. Only keep things that you need to study around you.

Do not put off working! Trying to find excuses not to work is likely to lead to you not doing your work at all, or doing it to a lower standard due to it being left to the last minute. Work at reasonable hours during the day, when you feel most active, not late into the evening



## Studying

Make sure you have a suitable workspace, and have everything you need to get started. It is essential that you are comfortable, have suitable lighting, as well as enough space to have everything you need to be productive.

Letting those around you know that you're going to be working is a good idea, as this can minimise interruptions.

Make sure you keep hydrated, and avoid working on an empty stomach, as hunger can be a distraction.

Plan how long you're going to be working for, and set yourself time targets. Working for hours on end is not productive. It is important to schedule regular breaks; move away from your workspace and allow yourself to rest and relax.

Write to-do lists or reminders. Prioritise your workload-look at dates, how big the work is, etc.





Work actively (write notes, talk aloud, test yourself, etc.)

Try and complete all tasks-don't leave things Unfinished.

Set targets or smaller deadlines at different stages in your assignment/task. This will help you to gauge whether you are on task to finish before the actual deadline.

Try not to set too much work for a day-things may not get done. If this is the case, you may need to reconsider your to-do list.

Be clear about what you want to achieve, and what you need to do to complete tasks successfully.

Set your own deadlines-ones that are manageable.





## Assignments

Be really clear about your assignments. Know what it is you've been asked to do. If you are unsure, talk to your teachers or email them. Your teachers are the best re-source, so stay in regular contact with them. Stick to your deadlines as best as you can. If you feel that you may miss the deadline, you must inform your teacher as soon as possible.

- Once you know what it is you need to do, then decide how you're going to get started.
- Plan what you're going to write about/how you're going to present it
- Mind-map ideas and what you need to do to complete assignments
- Start collating any information and research needed (it will help to keep your assignment question/task in mind, so that you get the right information)
- Do drafts of your assignment



## Revising

Here are some ideas to help you get started with revision:

- Organise a timetable, which includes all examination subjects you're going to be examined on, and examination dates. Include breaks, time allocated to other activities, such as jobs or clubs, and most importantly when you plan to eat/stop revising.
- Get resources ready, such as highlighters, pens, revision cards, paper and folders. Be organised and use folders for your notes/revision.
- Find out which exam boards your exams are with, and use their websites to find out any key information, e.g. Specifications, mark schemes, past papers, etc.
- Bookmark useful revision websites and videos, and get revision guides for each subject.



- Plan what topics and sub-topics you will be covering-you can always ask your teacher to help with this if you are not sure.
- Establish which areas you feel more confident with, and those that you feel need more attention.
- Decide how you're going to revise-you do not have to revise topics in the order you learnt them. Think about how you're going to actively revise? Maybe reading your notes and condensing them into flashcards, mind-mapping, creating rhymes, teaching it to others, etc. You could try a variety of methods. Use whatever suits your learning style.
- Go over past papers-practise these under timed conditions, and get used to exam conditions.
- Revise from the beginning of your course. It is a really good idea to keep going over work throughout the year.



## Support

Sixth form can be very challenging, and you will notice a big increase in your workload. You need to establish a routine that works for you, but most importantly, you need to look after yourself. Speak to your subject staff or the sixth form team if you have any concerns or issues, or if you just need some advice.

Your subject staff, tutors and sixth form staff are there to help you, so it is important to keep in touch with them.

Always check your emails! You will receive important emails throughout the academic year, and it is vital that staff can contact you. Remember your goals-when things get difficult, remember why you're doing this!

