



September 2018

GCSE AND A LEVEL COURSEWORK and Non-examined Assessment, 2018-20

To Parents of all pupils in the 4th, 5th and 6th Forms

Dear Parents,

You will be aware, I am sure, that Coursework (CW) or Non-Examined Assessment (CW/NEA) makes a significant contribution to the marks in some of the subjects that your son/daughter will be taking for GCSE or A Level. You can find all of our CW/NEA information regarding dates, deadlines, regulations and appeals procedure on the school website at www.kimbolton.cambs.sch.uk/academic.

What is Coursework exactly?

It generally consists of pieces of written or practical work that are set and marked internally within the school. Before the marks are submitted to the examination boards they are standardised between different teachers of the same subject. They are then subjected to a checking process by the exam boards themselves. These procedures are known as internal moderation and external moderation, respectively, and may result in marks being adjusted so as to make sure that all teachers and schools have marked to the same standard. The moderated marks are then combined with the marks scored in the written examinations, taken during May and June, to produce the final grade. The extent to which CW accounts for this final grade varies from subject to subject. Many subjects do not have CW.

What is Non-Examined Assessment?

In some subjects, pupils have to undertake supervised work in class that is certificated as undertaken by their teachers. This is sent to the exam boards so they know that these set tasks from the course have been completed successfully. No marks are awarded for NEA but completion is a requirement for the examination and grade. This is part of the course with no specific deadline. Departments organise this.

Why is there a need for deadlines?

CW assignments have specific deadlines by which they must be submitted for marking, so that adequate time is available for marking and moderation, and so that pupils can structure their use of time. Assignments are always set well in advance of these deadlines, leaving pupils ample time to complete them. However, some pupils find it difficult to manage their time during the coursework period and this can cause stress and difficulty with coping with the volume of work required. Some, or all, of the work will be conducted under effectively exam conditions within school. The nature of CW varies. All will be carefully explained to pupils as they go through their courses and the general rules are set out on the accompanying document.

What is the potential problem?

Some pupils have, in the past, through poor organisation and a natural tendency to leave everything until the last minute, allowed their workload to build up towards the deadlines to the point where they have been unable to meet them. If they are not careful, pupils can spend a disproportionate amount of time on a particular subject as a deadline approaches, and their work and revision in other subjects then suffers. With CW there is greater control of the times when tasks are undertaken so this problem is reduced from previous years. Pressures do remain though.



How is work structured to minimise this problem?

It is important to stress that all CW/NEA takes place during normal lesson and homework time in each subject. Parents and tutors have a role to play in making sure that excessive time, over and above the normal homework allocation, is not spent on CW to the detriment of work in other subjects. Pupils need to structure their work plans so as to avoid overloading themselves as deadlines approach, particularly during the second half of the spring term.

All CW/NEA is completed by the 1st May of the examination year, after which pupils need to be entirely focussed on their preparation for the public exams.

The main reason I am writing to you, at this stage, is to alert you to the possible pressure points and to let you know the overall picture for the year, in an attempt to try to avoid any problems. Taking into account the start dates and final deadlines in each subject, your son/daughter will need to plan the use of his/her time during the year to ensure he/she can meet all deadlines with comfort. It is particularly important, when devising a programme, that pupils take adequate consideration of known commitments, such as music, sport and drama. The information in the 4th and 5th Form CW tables on the website should help you to understand what is required in each subject. Subject staff will make contact with you in the run-up to a deadline if it looks likely that your son/daughter will struggle to meet it. In those circumstances it might prove necessary to detain him/her outside normal school hours.

Regulations and Appeals

I should add, at this point, that the school is required to give various assurances to the exam boards of the authenticity of CW work submitted. To this end, at least part of each piece of CW in each subject is carried out under supervised conditions, and pupils are briefed and emailed the school's policy for the conduct for CW. For your information, a copy of the regulations is on the school website along with the procedure for an appeal against the internally awarded coursework mark. Any appeal made regarding the mark awarded has to be on the correct procedures being followed rather than the mark itself. We carry out rigorous internal moderation before coursework is submitted for external exam board moderation and the final mark being awarded. Our aim is to award positive, fair marks as you can imagine.

Plagiarism

The regulations are very clear regarding work submitted by pupils that is not entirely their own. Plagiarism is an infringement of exam regulations and is taken very seriously by the exam boards and us. Pupils found to have copied work and submitted it as their own face disqualification from examinations. Excessive external help with work is also an infringement of exam regulations and is treated with the same severity as plagiarism. All pupils have been briefed by Mrs Turnbull, the Exams Officer, on the exact meaning of coursework regulations.

Please do not hesitate to contact relevant Heads of Department, or Mrs Turnbull, the Examinations Officer, if there is any aspect of CW/NEA that you wish to discuss further. Kimbolton pupils traditionally do very well in CW at GCSE and A Level, and I am very keen to ensure this continues to contribute to success individually and overall.

Yours sincerely

Mr C.J.A. Bates
Deputy Head (Academic)

