



St Cuthbert Mayne School

Joint Catholic and Church of England 11-18 Comprehensive School Dioceses of Plymouth and Exeter

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Dear Parents,

Re: Home Learning and Knowledge Organisers at St Cuthbert Mayne

I am writing to inform you of our Home Learning strategy. Home Learning is important for all students because it embeds the learning from the classroom and encourages students to become independent learners. We expect all students to complete Home Learning as per the Home Learning timetable. At St Cuthbert Mayne, we use Knowledge Organisers as our Home Learning strategy, with additional or different Home Learning set, where appropriate.

Why are we using Knowledge Organisers?

Research suggests that equipping students with the skills to be able to learn, retain and recall knowledge is key to examination success. The newly reformed GCSEs and BTECs are more rigorous and increasingly challenging. The focus of exams is the retrieval and application of knowledge to a range of different contexts. This puts increasing pressure on our students to know and retain even more information for longer. Our short term memory has limited capacity so the key to success is to regularly revisit the knowledge to be learned. This helps transfer the knowledge from the short-term memory to the long term memory. This not only helps to make 'learning stick' but it also frees up our short-term memory for day to day learning and experiences.

What are Knowledge Organisers?

A Knowledge Organiser is a set of key facts or information that students need to know and be able to recall in order to master a unit or topic in each of their subjects. Typically, an Knowledge Organiser fits onto one or two pages of A4, which helps students to visualise the layout of the page, which in turn helps them to memorise the information better.

How will a Knowledge Organiser help my child?

Knowledge Organisers are made available at the start of each term to help them remember what they are learning and to help them to see the bigger learning journey in their subjects. Instead of forgetting previous learning, students will continually revisit and retrieve prior learning from their memories. Teachers will inform students of which section of the Knowledge Organiser to focus on to support their learning in school.



International Cross
of Nails Schools



CHRIST IS OUR CORNERSTONE. LEARNING IS OUR FOCUS.

How will a Knowledge Organiser help me to help my child?

Many parents ask us how they can help to support their children at home. Some are worried that they do not have all of the subject specific knowledge to be able to help their children and some worry how to check that their children have done their Home Learning and revision. The Knowledge Organisers will help you to do all this easily. Most Home Learning will be linked to all or some aspects of the Knowledge Organiser. This might range from learning key words, spellings or remembering dates and definitions.

Here are some strategies that might help you to support your child's learning:

- Read through the organiser with your child – if you do not understand the content then ask them to explain it to you – ‘teaching’ you helps them to reinforce their learning.
- Try converting the information into a mind map or make your own version using clip art imagery if the organiser contains a lot of text.
- Display on the wall or the fridge door until the memory ‘sticks’.
- Test them regularly on the spellings of key words until they are perfect. Make a note of the ones they get wrong.
- Get them to make a glossary (list) of keywords with definitions or a list of formulae.
- Try recording the knowledge from the organiser as a sound file on their phones, so that your child can listen to it. Some students retain more information this way.
- Read sections out to them, missing out key words or phrases that they have to fill in.
- Test them about their knowledge.

How will teachers check students' understanding and check Knowledge Organisers have been completed?

This year, class teachers will be checking students' knowledge and understanding within their lessons rather than tutors stamping completed Home Learning during Ready to Learn time. Teachers will continue to reward students who demonstrate good knowledge and understanding as a result of completing their Knowledge Organisers.

Therefore, rather than submitting a piece of Home Learning, teachers will plan their lessons to include a range of knowledge retrieval activities during the lessons, for example a ‘low stakes’ test where students are required to recall knowledge that has previously been taught. These knowledge retrieval activities recap all taught content which encourages students to continually revisit previous learning, rather than just remembering the last lesson or most recent topic. Teachers will then have a good understanding of common misconceptions which will enable them to plan lessons and support students accordingly.

Where can I find Knowledge Organisers?

These will be distributed to students by Tutors at the start of each term at Key Stage Three and Core Subjects at Key Stage Four. Option subject Knowledge Organisers at Key Stage Four will be given out by Subject Teachers. Every student has been given a zipped plastic wallet to store their Knowledge Organisers and exercise book, and will be expected to have them in their school bag every day, this forms part of their basic equipment. They will also be available to download Knowledge Organisers

on the school website. If a student misplaces a Knowledge Organiser, it is their responsibility to replace it. There is a timetable which details which subject to focus on each evening within the Knowledge Organiser booklet.

Will this strategy be used in all subjects?

As reading is also another essential tool that improves students' ability to achieve in examinations, students will also be set reading as home learning in English and other literacy-based subjects. This may take the form of reading for pleasure, as part of our Accelerated Reader or "Drop Everything and Read" programme, or might be reading related to examinations or set texts where students may be required to annotate extracts in Key Stage Four. In Maths, the SPARX platform will be utilised from Years 7 to 11. Details of how to access this have been shared with you by the Maths Department.

Will there be any additional Home Learning set?

Subjects may set additional or different Home Learning where appropriate to support students applying the knowledge they have learnt. This may be set on Google Classroom by teachers and can be submitted and marked this way or students will have the task explained by their subject teacher in school and can record it on the designated additional Home Learning page within the Knowledge Organiser booklet.

Whilst public exams only happen in Key Stages Four and Five, we strongly feel that preparing students with the skills to revise and recall from a young age will be hugely beneficial as they move through their school journey.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kingdon". The signature is written in black ink and has a fluid, connected style.

Miss Kingdon
Deputy Headteacher