



# Learning Guide for Parents



Building Successful Futures

RESPECT · RESILIENCE · RESOURCEFULNESS · ASPIRE

# Learning at Victoria College

In primary school, your son will have mainly had one teacher. This would have been your main contact at the school, the person who you saw on parents evening and who wrote your son's report.

In secondary school, students are taught by a range of specialist teachers instead. Students will travel around the school having five different lessons a day, often with five different teachers. They will still have a main teacher who they will see each day and who is responsible for their pastoral welfare. This is the form tutor and your son will see them first thing in the morning and again in the afternoon for registration. This all means that moving into secondary school can be quite challenging for boys. They are having to process a great deal of change and, in spite of the excitement this elicits, they will feel tired and perhaps overwhelmed at the start of their Victoria College journey.

Over the course of a school day, boys will:

- Make nine changes of classroom or space
- Be taught in a huge variety of different ways- interactive, written, practical, active, IT based.
- Carry their equipment around with them to each lesson
- Navigate the lunch queue and pay for lunch or find somewhere to sit to eat lunch
- Attend a lunchtime club
- Work out how to use a timetable
- Remember homework or seating plans

Largely this will be with the same group of boys, which does make the process a bit easier. However, boys will be expected to be more independent and responsible for their learning. Some boys rise to this challenge from day one; others find it more difficult. Each boy is different and you will need to have open conversations with your son to find out how he is coping. Boys will be encouraged to talk about this in tutor time and with prefects and peer mentors.



# Learning in Class

At Victoria College, we are on a journey to **teach the best lessons in Jersey**. We want to inspire our boys and provide them with a world class education that will help them achieve their ambitions.

- Creating an exciting curriculum that meets the needs of our students
- Monitoring to ensure that students are making progress and if not, asking why not?
- Investment in SEND and HPL support for those who need it
- Making a commitment to staff development so that we acknowledge that we can improve and are striving to be the best teachers we can be
- Providing challenging and creative lessons that engage boys and give them a love of learning

Our subject specialists are highly qualified and passionate about what they teach. This enthusiasm is conveyed in their teaching and boys love learning new subjects that they have not come across before.

Each classroom is equipped with digital screens that allow interactive lessons to take place. We hope to harness the digital skills students have developed over the course of the past few months and a great deal of investment has gone into developing our digital provision to allow our boys to learn effectively and creatively, but always with an understanding of what works well in the classroom based on pedagogy and experience.



# Limitless Potential

At Victoria College, we believe that students have limitless potential. We interpret this phrase to mean that students have influence over their performance and attainment. What matters isn't their attainment in the KS2 SATs, but instead the effort and commitment they apply to their studies over time.

Regular deliberate practice, retrieval practice and modelling are all features of learning across the school. These are evidence based, so we know that these practices help students to learn successfully. Many of the lessons our boys encounter are challenging, stretching them to the limits of their understanding. Many find this difficult, particularly when they first arrive, and teachers are on hand to support anyone that asks for help.

However, what teachers cannot do is provide the effort and commitment that a student has to give in order to be a successful student. This resilience and resourcefulness is what we develop in our students over time, so they are not expected to arrive in September with this skill set. However, getting them to think about how this looks might help them prepare for school.

Your support in encouraging your son to be resilient and to not give up when work is difficult will reap dividends. Here are some ways you can help:

- Encourage him to use the words "yet" when he is struggling.
- Encourage him to seek the answers for himself. Apply the 3 B rule- brain, book, buddy- before he approaches you or the teacher for help.
- Encourage him to practice regularly. Some learning requires regular practice to embed knowledge or skills e.g. playing an instrument, Maths, reading
- Encourage him to be resourceful and develop strategies to help his organisation and learning e.g. using mnemonics to learn key knowledge
- If he is struggling with a problem, encourage him to think laterally about how to solve it. Rather than just looking at it one way, are there are other ways to solve it, using what you know?



# Learning and Values

Our core values are the character traits we wish to see develop in a Victoria College student.

**Respect** - treating others as we would expect to be treated ourselves

**Resilience** - pursuing difficult and meaningful goals with rigour and passion

**Resourceful** - finding ways to overcome goals

**Aspiration** - setting high goals and finding ways of achieving them

Your son will see these words around the school and we have embedded them in our learning, so as to encourage these qualities in our boys. Teachers have them up in their classroom and may refer to them in their teaching. They will praise students for these qualities and your son's reports will identify how far he has demonstrated these traits.

As a parent, it is worth familiarising yourself with these values as well, as you will come across them in many forms over the years.

# Learning at Home

Some boys will have had homework at primary school and be used to completing this. Others will not.

For this reason, some boys find transition difficult and homework can become a source of anxiety and stress for many boys.

Partly, this is because transition is hard. They will be tired because their brains are processing new things. For this reason, it is vital that they have a break from learning and eat when they get home.

A good strategy for managing homework completion is **to set a regular time and space for this**. If your son has his own device, this will help considerably, as will a printer. However, boys can print work at school, so don't worry if you don't have one.

**All homework tasks will have a guide as to how long should be spent on a task**. If your son is taking much longer than the suggested time *on a regular basis*, please inform the teacher or tutor, if it is more than one subject. This may highlight a need for support and the tutor/teacher will want to talk to your son to find out more.

We encourage boys to **complete homework on the night it is set**. This allows boys to reinforce their day's learning and will embed knowledge. It also means that they can manage their workload better, rather than having to rush several tasks the night before.

Parents have access to our main homework app, Show My Homework, and it is worth checking the portal regularly to monitor the homework that is being set. If you have any questions about homework, or if your son is struggling, please do contact your son's form tutor.

# What if my son is struggling?

Many students find the transition to secondary school challenging. They are learning new information and having to process a great deal of change. This is tiring and they may feel overwhelmed at the start.

However, after a few weeks, things begin to settle and most boys begin to adjust to the new routine and school life.

If you find that your son is still struggling academically after a month or so, then it is a good time to get in touch with his form tutor and raise your concerns.

There are many reasons why boys struggle:

- They are struggling to manage their workload
- They are struggling with the academic challenge
- They find change difficult

There are many channels of academic support available to students in the school.

- The Study Centre is our dedicated centre to support SEND/SEMH students.
- A homework club is available after school from Monday to Thursday. This is held in the library and is supervised by a teacher who can support students with their work. There is a small charge for this. If students are struggling with homework, they might find this offer useful.

If you have any concerns about your son's academic progress, please speak to his form tutor or Mrs Ogg.

# What if my son needs more challenge?

Some boys adapt very quickly to life at Victoria College and really enjoy the pace of lessons and specialist learning.

If your son is doing exceptionally well, it is likely that this will be picked up by his teachers. The school has a high potential learner (HPL) programme that identifies students with the potential to achieve the highest grades. Identification is based on CAT scores (taken in Year 6). Once identified, parents are notified and students are mentored by a peer mentor and encouraged to take up co-curricular opportunities that may extend them.

We also run an Aspirational Learner's Programme (ALPs) which promotes talks and events for all boys who are aspirational. We encourage our HPL students to attend these events.

The creation of an academic House cup also gives students the opportunity to get involved in challenging cerebral activities and gain glory for the house.

Each subject has produced a guide with suggested further reading, websites or activities boys can get involved with if they would like further academic challenge, including additional GCSEs and further challenges. These are accessible on the school website.

If you would like any further information regarding HPL students, please contact Mrs Priestly our ENCO.





# How is progress measured and communicated

At Victoria College, we have many methods of measuring and reporting on progress.

Boys will undertake assessments regularly in class. Often these are low stakes tests, as these are proven to help students retain knowledge. However, sometimes boys are tested on skills and knowledge, in order to ascertain how much progress they have made. This continuous assessment and feedback allows students to make progress over the course of the year.

Homework and classwork is also used to work out how students are doing. Teachers provide feedback to students in a number of ways: verbally in class, written in books or tests or via SMHW or self marking software. Some use codes to mark and others live mark as they go round the class. Others may choose to look for common misconceptions and then encourage students to correct errors. For this reason, you may see that work completed is not always marked in books, but there should be evidence of improvement over time.

In Year 7, the year culminates with a summative assessment in May. Students are given time to revise and carry out exams in exam conditions, so that they become familiar with these rules.

We report this information to parents in a variety of ways:



- **Progress Reviews:** These are issued at regular intervals throughout the year. These provide feedback on your son's academic progress and also their success at meeting the College Values of Respect, Resilience, Resourcefulness and Aspiration.



- **Summative Reports:** These will be issued once during the academic year for each year group
- **Subject and Tutor Evenings:** An evening when you can consult with tutors will be held in the second half of the Autumn Term. Parents will also have an opportunity to meet with subject teachers during the Spring Term.

**If you have any concerns about your son's progress, please speak to his form tutor.**

**We hope you found this guide helpful.**

**If you have any further questions about teaching and learning, please don't hesitate to get in touch with Mrs Plummer, Senior Teacher: Teaching and Learning.**



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