**BIOLOGY A LEVEL: SUPPORT SHEET FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS**

**Students: Where can students get help for themselves?**

There is a huge amount of content in A level Biology, and it is important to remember that successful students will be spending at least 4.5 hours studying the subject outside of lessons per week. Whilst your teachers are there to support you every step of the way, if you are seeking additional help it is really important that you do some preparation work first. We may be different from your school in that we will expect you to have accessed support materials and tried to work out any misunderstandings yourself before coming to us. We cannot reteach entire units, nor would that be the best way to help you progress. Rather than coming to a teacher saying “I do not understand enzymes”, try to look at textbooks, revisit the powerpoint and booklet, use the online resources and links, and then **compile a list of specific questions** that you wish to talk to your teacher about. Then, your session with us would consist of targeted, specific questions e.g. “How does this graph show the difference between competitive and non-competitive enzyme inhibitors?” This means that you are taking responsibility for your learning, and you will be using your support time with us as effectively as possible.

The following are resources that can help you prepare for a one-to-one meeting with your teacher:

1. Textbook: We use AQA Biology (2nd Edition) by Toole and Toole. Copies are available in the library
2. Godalming Online: We produce powerpoints and notes for every section of the course. These cover the key details and explain concepts, and often include key diagrams. If you are struggling with a particular concept it is often worth reading the accompanying notes to see if that can help clarify the issue.
3. Video resources: The Biology department has its own youtube channel, where we regularly add videos dealing with particularly tricky areas of the course (for example the statistical tests you are expected to know). In addition to this, we regularly use the Crash Course Biology and Bozeman Biology channels. These deliver the A level content clearly, with animations and in a concise manner. The easiest way to find a relevant video is to visit youtube and type in the name of the topic and the channel, for example “Crash course photosynthesis” will bring up a relevant video
4. Drop in sessions: The department run drop in sessions throughout the year. Details can be found posted on the doors of the Biology Labs. These sessions take place either at lunchtimes or after college. **These sessions are far more valuable if you have already accessed help from one or more of the other sources in advance.**

**Parents: How can you help?**

Whilst almost all the work that is require to be successful must come from the student, there are some things that parents can do that will help:

1) Encourage students to prepare for and attend the extra drop-in support sessions run by the department. These will be run at regular times throughout the year.

2) Be available to listen for your son/daughter to sit and explain a topic to you. No biological knowledge is required to be an attentive audience, and we have found that by actively explaining a topic students will be cementing their learning and practising using the key terminology to describe it.

3) Students will be sitting regular benchmark assessments. Find out when your son/daughter next has one, how they did in the last one, and encourage them to prepare in advance.

4) Encourage reading of journals such as Biological Science Review (available from the college library) or New Scientist. The more a student reads around the subject, the more comfortable they become writing about and explaining Biological concepts

5) Be aware that at A level only 50% of learning takes place in lessons, and the other 50% is independent learning outside of the classroom. Successful students are responsible for their learning and will do a significant amount of consolidation at home. Concepts that are introduced and explained once in the lessons will need time to sink in, and will need to be revisited regularly.

Proactive independent work

**What to do outside of lessons**

You should spend 5 h outside of lessons on homework and consolidation.

1. Do the homework set by your teachers

In any time you have left over:

1. Read the online notes to prepare for you next lesson
2. Watch a biology video – crash course/Bozeman/Craig savage/Penguin prof/ Amoeba sisters/snap revise <https://snaprevise.co.uk/course/33/aqa/biology-as/as-level-biology-new-spec/topic/video/1140> – there are lots to choose from! Use the videos to either prepare for your next lesson or consolidate what you have done in class
3. Make flash cards/mind maps/ write exam questions or other revision tools to consolidate what you have learnt
4. Read Biological science reviews – the library has copies or look in the ‘Further reading folder’ On Godalming on line
5. Compile a list of key words to check you know their definitions
6. Learn essential diagrams eg chloroplasts, mitochondria, Muscle structure, neurones, action potential, synaptic transmission etc
7. Draw out processes as a flow diagram eg LDR. ETC, formation of tissue fluid
8. Use <http://www.pxsbiology.com/> for extra resources and past papers
9. Go through the specification to identify any areas you are unsure of
10. Complete multiple choice quizzes on Godalming online
11. Consolidate Consolidate Consolidate – read through your notes from class, go back over the powerpoints and raise any questions with your teacher before the course moves on