

Supporting Your Son through his GCSE's.

A Guide for parents / Carers



Supporting your son in setting themselves up for revision

- Talk to your son about how you can support them and what they would find helpful.
- The simplest things often get in the way of starting revision - weeks can be lost while students 'are going to get around to sorting it soon...'. Get around these by making a list of what is needed and providing it (including the old- fashioned stuff like files, dividers, wall charts etc.) for the revision period.
- Encourage your son to empty their bag and file hand outs and information from lessons at the end of each day. They won't seem important until they need them, at which point they are likely to be lost under a mountain of random papers...
- Find out what support the school offers for revision (e.g. additional classes after school) via the school website or by asking the subject contact or Year Head.
- Support your son in choosing one good revision aid - book, app or website - for each subject. It's the best investment you will make. There are lots around so check with the teacher yourself if your child isn't aware of any guidance the school has offered (it may not have seemed important to your child at the time!).
- Help your son to plan their revision timetable. We will provide him with a template. It will take an investment of your time (probably several hours), but it is the single thing that will make the biggest difference to the effectiveness of the revision, and therefore the outcome. Children vary in the amount of support they need at each stage of the process.

Learning Hierarchy: Revision and Exam preparation

<p>I can teach others and repeat/apply in another context and at another time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I practice past papers in exam conditions and get them marked (or mark them myself) to see how I can improve. • Where I make mistakes in past paper practice, I focus on improving these areas and always redo the questions until I get them right. • My revision books contain practice questions which I complete and check. • I apply 'Read Decode Plan Answer' at all times throughout my revision practice. • I work productively with others in study groups outside of lessons. • I can test others and get people to test me. • I seek help from my teachers and peers when needed. • I have a clear plan and dedicate quality time to my revision starting from February ½ term at the latest.
<p>I understand and can repeat/apply.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I write my own revision notes that I use throughout the revision programme. • I use revision strategies that best suit me such as; • revision cards which summarise key topics • mind maps of topics • mapping topics on post-it notes • key word lists for each topic. • I have a revision plan for all subjects and topic which includes practice questions to test what I know and where I need to improve. • I use online revision tools which include questions on the topic I am revising.
<p>I follow you and understand.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am reading through the revision notes and resources provided by the school. • I have a plan for what to revise in each subject and when I will do it. • I have a detailed list of what topics to revise. • I create a safe place to revise. • I leave revision to the last minute.
<p>I follow you.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am attending school revision sessions. • I know what topics will come up on the exam.
<p>I don't get it!</p>	

Supporting your child in doing the revision

- Support your son in sticking to their revision plan and keeping to the start and finishing times they have agreed. Praise them when they do it, and if necessary agree a reward structure. Don't make treats dependent on certain results — it will only add to their feelings of disappointment and failure if they don't do as well as expected.
- Quietly top-up the 'workbox' with pens, memory—sticks, sticky notes, paper-clips etc. Don't get wound up about lost items if you can help it — motivation is hard enough to find for revision, and arguments about a 50p pen just aren't worth it.
- Provide favourite snacks and water for revision periods.
- Be sensitive to the pressure your son may be feeling — let them know that if they are really not up to it on odd days, it isn't the end of the world. Let it go when it really matters to them, and remind them of all the good work they have done, and will continue to do. It's the big picture that will count in the end.
- Keep up with regular 'check-ins' and try not to nag in between times. Show an interest in how the revision is going, talk through any difficulties and be prepared to help them reschedule their planning as necessary.
- Keep things in perspective — your son may not be doing things the way you would do them, or as often as you would like, but they are doing the best they can in the way that works for them at the stage they are at.

During the exam period

- The exam period can be very stressful for students. Encourage your son to keep a positive perspective — soon they will be on the other side of the 'exam mountain'.
- Try not to add to the stress levels in the house by 'rising to the bait' when / if your son pushes the limits. None of us are at our best under stress and it is likely that their behaviour will be challenging during this time. Pick your battles carefully, shelving any issues that are not of immediate importance. Now is not the time to bring up the issue of the untidy bedroom or the washing up being left again. There will be time to address these issues, just not now!
- Ensure that your son is prepared for the exam and talk through where and when it is, what they need to take etc. On the day of the exam, make sure they have a watch, water and supplies of pens, pencils etc. Remind them that they will not be able to have their phone or smart watch in the exam with them.
- Try to keep to routines, and not to introduce any instability unless it is absolutely necessary. On exam days, try to ensure they have a good breakfast (or suggest that they take a banana or other source of energy-food if they can't eat first thing).
- Before the exam, remind them that you love and value them whatever happens. Remind them of any strategies they have for keeping calm, and wish them good luck.
- After an exam, ask how it went but don't insist on a long post-mortem. Be available but respect your son's wishes to deal with their feelings in their own way. Try to adopt an attitude of 'tomorrow is another day', if things have not gone as expected.

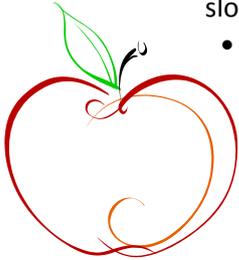
Healthy Body = Healthy Mind

Food for thought

Eating a variety of healthy foods doesn't just give your body a boost, it also benefits your brain cells. Skipping meals may well give you extra cramming time, but it can also leave you hungry and unable to concentrate. So, eat regularly and sensibly. Think wholemeal sandwiches and fruit, rather than cakes and biscuits!

Brain Fuel

- Bread, pasta, cereals and potatoes are filling and packed with starchy carbohydrates, which release energy slowly, meaning you can keep going for longer.
- Fruit and vegetables give you essential vitamins and minerals. Aim for at least five portions a day.
 - Food like pasties, chips and crisps are high in fat. Unless you want to emerge from your room looking like Jabba the Hut, keep them for treats.
 - Drink plenty of fluids. Dehydrated brains don't think clearly and water is healthier than sweet, fizzy drinks.
 - Meat, fish, pulses, milk and dairy foods are good sources of protein. Moderate amounts are essential for a healthy diet.
- Make sure you eat breakfast on the day of an exam.
- If you're not getting enough iron then you'll damage your ability to concentrate for long periods of time and your energy levels will begin to drop. If hour long sessions of revision are proving too much, try eating more red meat, eggs and leafy green vegetables like spinach.



Exercise: Staying in your room can seem like the best option when revision time is short. But a bit of the great outdoors can blow the cobwebs away and help you relax. If you can't get out, at least get up and out of your chair for a stretch and a wander. Better still, go for a swim or put those footie boots on and give your mind and body a workout.



Learn to relax

Take mini breaks throughout the day. Work on relaxation techniques, such as taking slow deep breaths.

Exercise

Physical activity provides relief from stress. The brain uses 20% of oxygen in the blood so you need to think about your posture and exercise to make sure your body gets enough. 30 minutes of sport or a short walk will do the trick.



Get organised

Have a realistic daily schedule including revision, sleep, eating, relationships and recreation.

Be positive

Talk positively to yourself! Don't pay attention to that internal voice saying you can't do it; tell yourself you can do it and you will do it.

Time

Recognise that you can only do so much in a given time.
Try to pace, not race.

Stress Management

Talk

Talking and meeting with friends and occasionally sharing deep feelings and thoughts can be helpful in reducing stress.

Make a list

Make a list of the things that are worrying you and the possible things that could happen – then your brain will stop bringing them forward all the time.

Stay calm

Make sure you are in a calm, positive mood before you start studying.

Sleep

Don't become overtired by forcing yourself to work late. Your brain needs time to sort out the information it has come across during the day. Your ideal sleep time is about 8 hours a night.

Be healthy

Watch your eating habits. Make sure you eat sensibly and have a balanced diet. Avoid too much chocolate, cola, caffeine and foods with lots of additives.

Drink lots of water.

Further information and helpful websites

- <http://www.lifehacker.co.uk/2015/04/28/10-great-apps-to-help-you-ace-your-exams> - useful list of apps to help with revision.
- <http://positivelymad.com/Resources/Students> for some excellent ideas for remembering information.
- www.bbc.co.uk/education - and choose 'GCSE' — resources galore for almost all subjects, along with specific advice and planners from tips.
- <http://www.justincraig.ac.uk/revision-techniques-gcse>
- <https://getrevising.co.uk/>
- www.s-cool.co.uk and <http://revisionworld.co.uk/gcse-revision> for some general tips and subject-specific information.
- www.khanacademy.org Although this site has an American focus, it offers lots of excellent learning resources for a wide range of topics, particularly maths and programming.
- www.s-cool.co.uk — offers tips on getting through exam days.
- www.childline.org.uk (search for 'Examstress') (Tel: 0800 11111) - offers tips and advice on exam stress.

- Amazon, WH Smith and other online retailers all sell a wide variety of hard copy subject-specific revision guides, such as the popular CGP series; search 'GCSE Guides'.

External Exam Timetable 2018 – Written papers only

Dates	Morning –	Afternoon –
26th – 27th April	Art practical exam – all day	Art practical exam – all day
Monday 14th May	Computer Science Paper 1 (Year 11) (1h30min)	Religious Studies Paper 1 (Year 11) (1hr45mins)
Tuesday 15th May	French Listening Foundation (Year 11) (35mins) French Listening Higher (Year 11) (45mins) French Reading Foundation (Year 11) (45mins) French Reading Higher (Year 11) (1hr)	Combined Science Biology Paper 1 (Year 11) (1hr15min) Biology Paper 1 (Year 11) (1hr45mins)
Wednesday 16th May	P.E. Studies Paper 1 (Year 11) (1hr45mins) Urdu Listening (Year 11) (35mins) Urdu Reading (Year 11) (50mins) Gujarati Writing (Year 11) (1hr) Portuguese Writing (Year 11) (1hr) Turkish Writing (Year 11) (1hr)	Religious Studies Paper 2 (Year 11) (1hr45mins)
Thursday 17th May	Combined Science Chemistry Paper 1 (Year 11) (1hr15mins) Chemistry Paper 1 (Year 11) (1hr45mins)	Computer Science Paper 2 (Year 11) (1hr30mins)
Friday 18th May	French Writing Foundation (Year 11) (1hr) French Writing Higher (Year 11) (1hr15mins)	P.E. Studies Paper 2 (Year 11) (1hr30mins)
Monday 21st May	Portuguese Listening (Year 11) (1hr15mins)	Gujarati Listening (Year 11) (50mins) Turkish Listening (Year 11) (50mins)
Tuesday 22nd May	English Literature Paper 1 (Year 11) (1hr45mins)	Geography Paper 1 (Year 11) (1hr15mins)
Wednesday 23rd May		Combined Science Physics Paper 1 (Year 11) (1hr15mins) Physics Paper 1 (Year 11) (1hr45mins)
Thursday 24th May	Maths Paper 1 Non Calculator (Year 11) (1hr30mins)	
Friday 25th May	English Literature Paper 2 (Year 11) (2hrs15mins)	
Monday 4th June	History Paper 1 (Year 11) (1hr15mins)	
Tuesday 5th June	English Paper 1 (Year 11) (1hr45mins)	Geography Paper 2 (Year 11) (1hr15mins)
Wednesday 6th June		Music (Year 11) (1hr30mins)

		Gujarati Reading (Year 11) (1hr) Portuguese Reading (Year 11) (1hr) Turkish Reading (Year 11) (1hr)
Thursday 7th June	Maths Paper 2 Calculator (Year 11) (1hr30mins)	
Friday 8th June	English Paper 2 (Year 11) (2hrs)	History Paper 2 (Year 11) (1hr45mins)
Monday 11th June	Combined Science Biology Paper 2 (Year 11) (1hr15mins) Biology Paper 2 (Year 11) (1hr45mins)	Geography Paper 3 (Year 11) (1hr30mins)
Tuesday 12th June	Maths Paper 3 Calculator (Year 11) (1hr30mins)	History Paper 3 (Year 11) (1hr20mins)
Wednesday 13th June	Combined Science Chemistry Paper 2 (Year 11) (1hr15mins) Chemistry Paper 2 (Year 11) (1hr45mins)	
Thursday 14th June		
Friday 15th June	Combined Science Physics Paper 2 (Year 11) (1hr15mins) Physics Paper 2 (Year 11) (1hr45mins)	Polish Listening (Year 11) (50mins)
Monday 18th June		Arabic Listening (Year 11) (45mins) Arabic Reading (Year 11) (1hr30min)
Tuesday 19th June	ADV History Paper 3 (Year 11) (2hrs15mins) Graphics (Year 11) (2hrs)	
Wednesday 20th June	Polish Reading (Year 11) (1hr) Polish Writing (Year 11) (1hr)	Arabic Writing (Year 11) (1hr)
Friday 22nd June	Product Design (Year 11) (2hrs)	
Monday 25th June		

Thursday 23rd August GCSE results issued at school 11am-12.30am

Note: If you are sitting 2 exams in one session you will do the first one listed on the timetable, have a short supervised break under exam conditions, then do the second one.