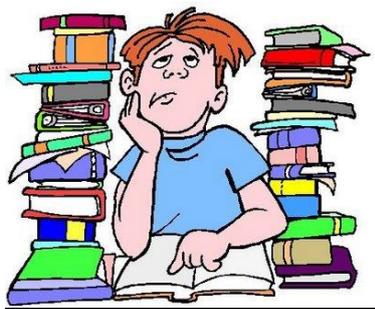


TheNorth
school

A Parent's
Guide to
Exam
Preparation

"There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, and learning from failure" - General Colin Powell



How can parents make a difference?

Research and experience shows that children whose parents/carers take the opportunity to be frequently interested in their child's learning make most progress.

Revision should be used to fix the learning beyond the classroom. It can provide the opportunity for learners to reflect on their understanding and extend skills and knowledge in a particular area.

You will also get to know your child's particular strengths and difficulties and find out what they are studying. Helping your children with their work is not the same as doing it for them; discussing their work with them strengthens their understanding.

The good news is that you don't need to be an expert in any of the subjects your child chooses, to make a real difference. You also don't need to give up your life and other responsibilities – you just need to know how best to spend the time you do have.

Let them be the teacher – if you don't know anything about what they need to know in Chemistry – ask them to teach you.

We learn:

10% of what we read

20% of what we hear

30% of what we see

40% of what we see and hear

70% of what is discussed

95% of what we teach to someone else

This means that the best method of learning is having to explain or teach a topic to someone else.

One of the hardest demands on students is that of understanding the long-term importance of doing the best they can, and learning to shelve short-term fun at times, in the interest of long-term benefits (not easy even for adults).

Children will also differ in their levels of maturity, their ability to take responsibility for their learning, organisational skills and levels of motivation. Your support, encouragement and interest can make a spectacular difference to your child's motivation and ability to cope with the academic and organisational demands of the exam period.

Why encourage your child to revise?



It can reduce panic – gives them control and confidence.

It means exams reflect what they can do, not what they didn't bother to do – show what you know!

It can help them to identify problem areas.

Most importantly, it will help them to succeed.

Revision=Success



Where to start? When to do it?

The time to start is now!

Help your child work out how much time they have, being realistic.

Get them to take into account their ideal time of day to work – work out when they will revise.

Break it down to make it seem manageable. 'Revising for GCSEs' sounds like too much hard work. 'Revising key French verb endings' is do-able.

Establish a work area which supports revision. Find a fixed place for your child to study (a particular desk/room at home, etc.) that becomes firmly associated with productive work. All the equipment and materials needed should be within reach, and the room should be well lit and ventilated, but not too comfortable! Keep books and notes on the desk to a minimum and decorate walls with colourful notes and key vocab. Music is fine as long as it helps and blocks out distracting noises but no other electronic devices should be used, as they will only provide a welcome distraction!

Agree the balance between work and social life and stick to the agreement. Again, flexibility is the key – if a special night comes up, agree that they can make up the work at a specified time.

All students fall behind, feel demotivated or overwhelmed, or struggle with the balance of social, work and school demands at times. When your child feels like this, berating and threatening them will have a negative effect. Talk to them about the issues, acknowledge their feelings and adopt a sensible attitude in wanting to find a solution.

Be flexible – use the 80/20 rule. If your child is sticking to what they are supposed to be doing 80% of the time, they will be doing alright.

If your child asks for your support, encourage them by helping them to see the difficulties in perspective. Teenagers often take an all or nothing 'catastrophic' approach to difficulties – "I've messed up this essay, I might as well give up."

Make sure they use their revision timetable to keep up with revision and encourage them to attend revision sessions outside school hours (OSL, Saturday school, Easter revision sessions...etc)

What and how?

Does your child know what they need to know?

- What will actually be tested in the exam?
- On what day is the exam?
- When does the exam start and how long does it last?

Do they have the notes and material they need?

- exercise books, textbooks, folders that contain the information they need.
- Most revision guides have key information already summarised

If there are any gaps, encourage them to ask their subject teacher or Learning Leader.

Help provide the right resources for your child to revise actively:

- post-it notes
- pen, ruler, paper, scissors & glue
- internet access if you have it
- dictionary
- highlighter pens
- coloured pens
- revision guides, revision CDs and podcasts.

Help your child by asking the right questions:

- When is your exam...?
- What are you likely to be tested on...?
- What do you need to take on the day...?
- What strategies are helping you most..?
- You've been studying...What can you teach me...?
- What support do you need...?



Revision Techniques

Learners' preferences can be categorised as 3 main learning styles:

- Visual – (people who learn best visually – colour, pictures, charts, diagrams.)
Auditory – (people who learn best through what they hear – discussion, tape recordings.)
- Kinaesthetic - (people who learn best through 'doing' – practical activities, drama.)

Whilst there may be a predominant learning style, using a range of styles and techniques will support a rounded and varied revision programme.

A selection of revision techniques to cater for your child's preferred learning styles are suggested below:

Visual:

- Use post its and stick on wall
- Summarise notes
- Highlight or circle important information
- Use a traffic light system to indicate progress in learning and action points
- Draw diagrams, pictures, mind maps, collage
- Keywords displayed around the room

Auditory:

- Make up mnemonics, rhymes
- Create a podcast and listen
- Test yourself or friends
- Be the teacher – teach someone else something you're revising
- Raps, rhyme, chants and verse, dramatic readings
- Music for energising, relaxing visualising and reviewing.

Kinaesthetic:

- Make your own PowerPoint
- Create your own revision cards
- Act topics out!
- Play a revision game on BBC Bitesize or other online revision guides
- Design and build activities
- Gestures or movements to demonstrate a concept

On the eve of the exam

Please don't add to the stress levels by 'rising to the bait' when your child pushes the boundaries. Shelve the battles that don't need winning just yet.

Help prepare your child for the exam – talk with them about when it starts, how long it lasts for, what are the main topics that might come up. Don't 'over egg' this – they may have worked all day and have come down stairs to relax.

Encourage your child to get a good night's sleep and help them to be organised for the next morning. Preparing their bag, uniform and food for the next day will reduce the stress the following morning.

On the morning of the exam

Remind your child of the following:

Arrive at school early – only fools leave it too late and rush – catch the much earlier bus.

Allow time for your brain to wake up – have a shower, **eat breakfast** – take a banana with you.

Do a final check of the subjects you will be doing that day – know the structure and how many sections there are.

Make sure you have EVERYTHING you need and take spares – do not get into the stress of asking teachers for things you should have brought.

Take a pen you enjoy writing with – take 2 just in case.

Don't forget that it is natural to be nervous. It actually gives your brain the extra adrenalin it needs to make the final effort.

Attendance

90% in an exam is a great result but in terms of attendance it means that the student has missed 1 of every 10 days. Over a period of a year this is equivalent to 4 weeks of school and it will ultimately affect their final result.

Whilst we cannot turn back the clock, it is imperative that your student attends school every day from here on in.

Useful Information

Coursework Deadlines

- Geography 24th March
- English 1st April
- Catering 15th April
- Graphics 15th April
- RM 15th April
- Statistics 29th April
- ICT 28th April
- Computing 1st May
- History 7th May
- Photography 9th May
- Fine Art 18th May
- PE 27th May
- Music 30th May

Controlled Assessment Deadlines

- Dance 15th April
- Photography 21st April, 22nd April
- Music 22nd April-practical
- Music w/c 25th April-written

OSL

Intervention sessions after school

Day	OSL
Monday	MFL, Graphics, Science
Tuesday	Graphics, Ethics, Computing, Geography, Leisure and Tourism
Wednesday	MFL, Art, English, Computing, Photography
Thursday	Dance, Technology, Maths
Friday	Art, History, Food Technology. Music, H & SC, PE

Useful Websites

Information correct at time of going to press.

General support for teenagers

- www.projecteducation.co.uk/gcse offers links to GCSE chat forums.
- www.bbc.co.uk
- www.childline.org.uk
- www.youthaccess.org.uk

General parent support

- www.parentlineplus.org.uk confidential helpline for parents on 0808 800 2222
- www.projecteducation.co.uk

Exam boards

- www.aqa.org.uk the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA)
- <http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/home.html> (Edexcel)
- www.ocr.org.uk Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR)
- www.wjec.co.uk the Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC)

Coursework and revision

- www.sparknotes.com
- www.gcseguide.co.uk – Use the ‘bookshop’ option to see what revision guides are available in each subject area.
- www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize
- www.gcse.com

Careers

- <https://direct.gov.uk>. The governments’ official careers information site. Visit the **Education and Learning**

- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/studentlife/careersandchoices/>

- Visit <http://nextstep.direct.gov.uk> and select **Planning your career** then **Job profiles** for free information on hundreds of different careers.