

## **How can you help your child prepare for his or her GCSE's?**

Your child will need all of our support to achieve his or her best possible grades, so here is a guide as to what parents and carers can do to support their children through their exams.

**Plan** The secret to doing well in exams lies in planning. You can help your child to create a clear revision plan and method of studying which will make him or her feel more in control of his or her work.

**How many hours a day should your child revise?** After a school day, each Year 11 pupil should be doing between 3 and 4 hours every evening. On a non-school day, a good 6-8 hours a day should suffice.

**How should revision be done?** Also, make sure the revision is broken down into smaller chunks. It's best to do 30 minutes or an hour on one topic, take a 5 minute break and switch to another topic.

**Active what?** Active revision, getting the brain to use the information as you revise it. It is better to write or draw out the relevant material rather than stare at it for hours upon end. Ideally, doing something different each time you revise.

### **What active study ideas can pupils use?**

- Mind-maps
- Note making
- Bullet pointing
- Flash cards/Index Cards (Small bite size chunks or questions with answers written onto blank post cards)
- Flow diagrams
- Past Papers
- Revision posters (pin them to bedroom walls, on cupboards, backs of doors etc).
- BBC Bitesize (Use the right exam board though)
- Cornell Notes (Google it)
- Mnemonics
- Study groups (if friends aren't distracting)
- Study partnerships (To test each other)

**What shouldn't pupils do?** Avoid social networking websites such as Facebook and Twitter during revision sessions. Revising and social networking at the same time do not go together, despite the predictable claims otherwise from teenagers. However, using Facebook time as a reward e.g. 20 minutes online for accomplishing a target of two hours revision can be very effective.

**What's a good revision environment?** Pupils should make full use of the environment they will revise in. They can put positive comments up in their rooms for encouragement e.g. "I can get that 9 in English", "If I work hard I can do it easily", "I will get 8 grades", "I will succeed in my GCSEs". Lots of air, a warm room can make you drowsy. Make sure the room is light and airy.

**Be supportive** Balance pushing the child to revise as hard as they can and providing support. It can be equally damaging to interrupt pupils revision with queries or demands, but offering to bring up a cup of tea before they get started and quietly refilling a jug of water can be immensely helpful or a surprise treat at the end of the day. Don't resort to bribery but always try to speak about revision as a positive thing towards their goal of good GCSEs. Also, every pupil will have their own way in which to revise, so please be accommodating. Some pupils may need all their work around them as they study, even if this appears to be an almighty mess to everybody else. After all many are going to be writing exams which test two whole years of work. As long as they appear to be working to a method and have clearly planned out their revision then it's best to leave them to the way that works best. Try and make home life as calm and pleasant as possible, noisy housework while they have their books out can be frustrating. Remember things will return back to normal near the end of June.

**However...**Encourage your child to join family meals, even if it's a busy revision day – it's important to have a change of scene and get away from the books and computer for a while.

**Just before the exam:** It's important to get a good night's sleep before an exam, so discourage your child from staying up late to cram. And make sure he or she eats a good breakfast on the morning of the exam.