

As your child starts Year 11 you will be wondering how you can support them.

Parental support is 8 times more important in determining a child's academic success than social class.

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.

There are a number of ways that you can help during this stressful year. This booklet is divided into three sections:

Section 1: Helping Your Child with Their Organisation

Section 2: Helping Your Child with Their Revision

Section 3: Helping Your Child Stay Calm

SECTION 1: HELPING YOUR CHILD WITH THEIR ORGANISATION

1. Make Sure Your Child Is Well Equipped

One of the first things is to make sure they have all the equipment that they may need to revise. Your child will find it useful to have the following items at home to support them with their revision all of the time:

- Highlighters
- Coloured Pens
- Blank Revision Cards
- Post-it notes
- Plain paper
- Lined paper



2. Remove Distractions

You also need to make sure that they have a suitable space to revise in. Minimise distractions for them while they are revising by making sure that the area they are working in is peaceful, clean and tidy and free from potential distractions such as Facebook.

3. Help Them Produce A Revision Timetable

You can also help them to produce a revision timetable. There is advice on how to do this on the school website. Once they have their revision timetable put it up somewhere where everyone can see it so that you can encourage your child to do their revision even when they might be lacking in motivation.

4. Encourage Your Child To Start Revising Early

Little and often is the best way to revise. From September your child should be setting aside a few hours a week solely devoted to revision. As the November mocks come closer they should increase the amount of revision they are doing each week. Then from February, your child needs to start their serious revision programme in preparation for the summer exams.

5. Make Sure That They Are Doing Something When They Revise

Many people think that simply re-reading notes is an effective way to revise. It isn't. When your child is doing their revision make sure that they are actually doing something to condense their notes down such as creating flashcards or mind-maps or that they are doing tests such as past exam questions.

SECTION 2: HELPING YOUR CHILD WITH THEIR REVISION

Your child will receive information from the school about the best ways to revise but you will also want to be able to offer them some advice. Below is a list of some of the most effective revision strategies:

1. Get them to test themselves – a lot!

Research shows that testing in order to recall content is the best way of getting us to think hard. Thinking about and getting the answer is much better than re-reading notes. Your child should be preparing a short knowledge test on each of the different topics they need to revise in a subject. They should then sit down, without their notes and test themselves.

2. Past Papers

Encourage them to do as many past exam questions as possible. Exam papers are available online on each of the exam boards websites along with the mark schemes. Students should attempt an exam question and then use the mark scheme to self-assess how well they have done.

3. Talk to them

Get your child to tell you what they've have learnt that day or what they are revising, then quiz them at random times. At breakfast, at the dinner table or even in the car. Ask them questions that relate to their studies and get them to think hard about their answers. Get them to explain their answers to you giving reasons. You can also look through their books to get an idea of what to quiz them on. Their books should be beautifully presented because they will be their main resource for revision.

4. Get them to read around the subject

Understanding the subject better helps children to build links and remember things more easily. Recommend that they watch documentaries or visit places that are linked to the topics they are studying in lessons.

5. Get them to produce memory cards for keywords

They should write a keyword on one side of the card and the definition on the other side of the card. You can now test them regularly to make sure they know all the keywords for their different subjects.

There are further strategies and more detailed explanations of these strategies on our school website.

SECTION 3: HELPING YOUR CHILD STAY CALM

As you know, you will play a hugely important role in keeping your child calm during this year. Stress is the body's normal response to a challenge, threat or excitement.

During revision and exams, anxiety and stress are common problems for students, even for those who appear confident and calm. While small stress levels can make pupils alert and focused, too much can reduce concentration and confidence.

It is important that you encourage your child to take breaks during their revision. If they have timetabled a one hour slot to revise a subject they should actually only spend 40 minutes revising and then have a 20 minute break. If they have timetabled a 30 minute slot for revision, they should revise for 20 minutes and then give themselves a 10 minute break.

A healthy diet, regular exercise and sleep are extremely important at this time of year. Please ensure that your child gets plenty of sleep and drinks plenty of water. It also helps if your child does not drink energy drinks or caffeinated drinks.

A common mistake many students make during this crucial period is to eat poorly and unhealthily. Junk food, lots of chocolate, energy drinks and crisps are often eaten in place of normal meals to “keep energy levels up”. However, this is not only harmful to their long-term health, but can also negatively affect exam performance as this type of food and drink can actually increase a person's tension and anxiety levels.

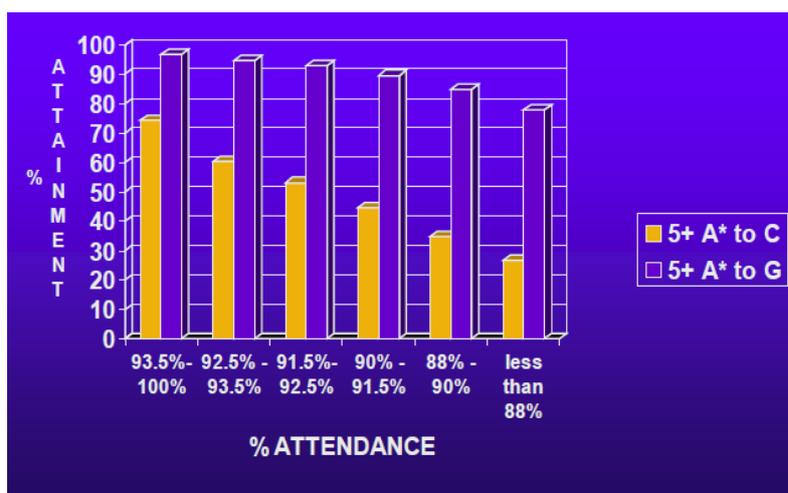
On the actual exam days

You can do a lot to help your child prepare for exam days.

- Make sure the alarm is set so they're not rushing and have time to eat breakfast.
- Encourage them to take five minutes to check they have everything they need, like extra pens and pencils, calculators and maths equipment. If they have a mobile phone, remind them not to take it with them into exam room
- Say: “Don't panic, don't worry - just do your best.” Tell them to say it to themselves during an exam.

Finally, another way that you can support your child during Year 11 is to ensure that their attendance at school is excellent. Research suggests that if a child misses 17 days or more (90% attendance or lower) during Year 11 it can affect their attainment and mean that they underperform in all of their subjects by one grade on average.

The bar chart below shows the link between attendance and attainment:



Thank you for your continued support in helping your child achieve the best possible results that they can in the summer.