

Thomas Gainsborough School: Remote Learning Support for SIXTH FORM STUDENTS

You've gone from physically attending lessons in an academic environment with a teacher in front of you to sitting at home in online lessons, trying to maintain the same levels of engagement. We know that this can be a tall order at times.

It can be done! With self-discipline, you can still study effectively and look after yourself. Of course, this has always been a crucial element of success in sixth form but it is more important than ever to recognise how much you can affect your wellbeing and success as a student. Here is some of the best advice we have gathered together to help you stay on track.

Maintain structure

This is a really important one; without a structured day procrastination can reign, so make a plan for each day and stick to it. You will still have a timetable of your online lessons, so schedule independent study around those sessions. Try to start at the same time every day and finish at the same time every day.

Find a suitable study space and be ready

Before you begin, you need to separate your sixth form life from your home life. Designate a space in your home to be your study area and only go there to study. Don't be tempted to just lie on your bed with your laptop – lines between studying and relaxing can become blurred, which makes self-motivation even harder! Your study area should be quiet, comfortable, with good light and a strong WiFi connection. Have all the right tools to hand and log in to the lesson before it starts so that you know everything is working.

Stay in Touch

If you find that you are having any difficulty with the learning tasks you are being set let your teacher know. They can factor this into their planning and they will want to help you to continue your learning.

Study Buddies

To help with procrastination or low motivation, you can agree with a friend to link up online via video and work independently with your friend linked in and doing their work too. Although you are not actually communicating with each other the whole time, it can be really reassuring to have someone else there – it is a little bit like working in a study area. You can rest and take breaks together, too. Just bear in mind that if you are both not committed to studying this can be a hindrance!

Breaks and Socialising online

Take a break with your peers and friends at the normal times you would have done – use social media to hook up and have a chat, take a break and gossip, banter, help each other with learning – whatever you did together when hanging out in social areas at TGS. If you're taking a break from independent study, every 20 to 40mins is a good idea.

Find a cheerleader

Whether this is a parent or someone else in your household, ask someone to encourage you and make sure you stick to your study schedule. Keep them informed as to the assignments you're working on and to check in with you regularly. It's always easier when it feels like there's someone else on the journey with you.

Sleep

Stick to a routine of waking and sleeping as if you were still arriving at TGS every working day. It can be easy to slip into late mornings and ever later bedtimes – this reduces the amount of daylight you receive and it is important to get plenty of daylight during the day – watch out for this and if you find your body clock moving later and later, do two mornings in a row of getting up really early – you will then be tired that evening and be able to sleep earlier. Oh, and get dressed before you attend lessons or start independent study! It helps with keeping home and study separate.

Rewards

Reward yourself for completing substantial pieces of work – play games, watch TV, socialise – your wellbeing is important. However, reward yourself AFTER working hard. If you reward yourself first, it will be really difficult to then get into the difficult task of studying hard for your courses – study is hard, so do the hard stuff first.

The way we are learning now is like revising for exams, which is like remote learning and independent study anyway. Aiming for good independent study skills and managing your time are some of the most valuable and employable skills you can have.

The most effective way to remote study is to start this straight away, so that your routine isn't broken. If you leave it for a few days before you get into a routine, it can be difficult to get momentum going again.

The sixth form team at TGS is here to support you – if you have any problems, please contact us at sixth@tgschool.net.