



Tips for parents...

Exam time can be a major cause of stress for children and parents. Parents are often anxious about how much (or how little) their children are studying, whether they are looking after themselves and whether they will get the results they need. Some parents may also find their own difficult memories of exams or school return at this time and make it harder to help their children.

A selection of tips to help deal with exam stress include:

During revision ...

- Support your child in finding what works for them such as:
 - ✓ *chunking revision time into sessions (eg. 45 minutes) punctuated by short breaks*
 - ✓ *making concise revision cards*
 - ✓ *creating mind maps*
 - ✓ *completing past papers in timed conditions*
 - ✓ *practise planning longer written answers and then drafting them in timed conditions*
 - ✓ *highlighting revision guides and class notes*
- Help them create and maintain a quiet space, free from interruptions for their revision (including television and Facebook!)
- Encourage your child to take regular breaks to break up the revision
- Stock up on healthy snacks and make sure they have enough sleep, water and good meals
- Accept it's going to be a more stressful time for the family so try to remain calm and be patient
- If you have any concerns or questions, contact the school rather than relying on your child to do so - contact is always possible through phone, email and in person

On exam days ...

- Make sure breakfast is eaten!
- Through the exams, support their organisation so that they have the correct equipment in a clear pencil case and a clear bottle of still water
- After an exam your child may not want to talk about it immediately so let them decide when they want to

When it's all over ...

- Feelings may 'catch up' with your child after a sustained effort of studying hard and you may need to 'let them be' for a while
- If they are anxious, reassure them that they have done their best for now and any problems can be dealt with in the future
- Try and plan something nice for them for trying their best, however they feel it went

The following section summarises ideas shared and promoted with students which encourage successful revision and exam preparation.



Ideas we have shared with students for successful revision ...

- **Make a plan**
Create a schedule that suits you, ensures coverage of all subjects and highlights the exams you will be taking. Include all key topics, not just the ones you hope might come up!
- **Share this plan**
The simple act of sharing this plan with someone (a parent for example) increases the chance of keeping to it and therefore getting the most.
- **Prioritise what you learn and revise**
Identify the subjects, topics and questions most likely to cause you problems and focus on these to begin with when your brain is most receptive to learning. Tackling the most difficult bits first will give you the best chance of cracking them!
- **Learn material and practice applying it**
Now get down to doing your revision! Stick to your plan. Learn the academic content, theories and skills; dedicate time to practise exam style, timed questions to improve your exam technique. Then transfer the improved knowledge, skills and understanding to boost your current learning.
- **Set yourself revision goals, rather than amounts of time**
When you sit down to revise, set yourself tangible goals such as memorising twelve quotations, being able to solve three difficult equations etc. Making realistic goals like this will help improve your learning efficiency.
- **Take regular breaks and make them count**
Planned breaks are vital and can help assimilate new information which is crucial when revising. To begin with, 30 to 45 minutes of revision/10 minutes break will establish good habits. During breaks resist the temptation of doing anything that needs you to consider processing any new information (Facebook etc!) – get up, get a breath of fresh air and get back to it!
- **Eat well, exercise, sleep well and keep hydrated**
Nutrition will play an important part (find out about ‘brain nourishing foods’) in keeping you in a great state for learning. Physical exercise will also keep you fit for learning! Research has suggested that having a full 8 hours’ sleep can increase memory retention by up to 35%!

On the exam day ...

- Eat something an hour or two before the exam - bananas are recommended!
- Stay calm
- Avoid people who might stress you more
- Read through the whole exam paper checking carefully which questions need to be answered
- Plan your answers then re-read the question to make sure you are going to answer it!
- Re-read your work, checking grammar and spelling