

Supporting your child through GCSE exams



Assisting with your child's revision

The secret to doing well in exams lies in planning ahead and staying calm. You can help your child to create a clear revision plan and method of studying that will make them feel in control of their work and by talking to them about the revision they are completing each day. Mapping out their time is also important to ensure that students do not work too hard - they need regular breaks and time to do the things they enjoy.

Help your child create a clear revision plan that includes regular breaks and time to do the things they enjoy.

Tips for revision planning



- Create a comprehensive revision timetable - ask them to show you this, chat it through with them and ask them how they are going to organise their time.
- Encourage them to break revision time into small chunks - 30 minutes to one hour-long sessions with breaks at the end of each session often work well. Encourage your child to take regular breaks.
- Make sure your child has all the essential books and materials.
- Help your child to condense notes onto postcards to act as revision prompts and use these to test them in quick bursts.
- Ask them questions about what they are learning.
- Go through school notes with your child or listen while they revise a topic.
- Time your child's attempts at practice papers.

Providing all round support

The best way to support your child during the stress of revision and exams is to make home life as calm and pleasant as possible. It helps if other members of the household are aware that your child may be under pressure and that allowances might need to be made for this.



Encourage your child to break revision into small chunks of 30 minutes to one hour-long sessions.

It's important to have a change of scene and get away from books and the computer for a while.

Make sure there are plenty of healthy snacks in the fridge and try to provide good, nutritious food at regular intervals. 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. Also encourage your child to take regular exercise. A brisk walk around the block can help clear the mind before the next revision session.

Sleep, sleep, sleep!

Encourage your child to wind down before bed and give themselves half an hour or so between studying, watching TV or using a computer and going to bed to help them get a good night's sleep.

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.



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Talk about exam nerves

Remind your child that feeling anxious is normal. Nervousness is a natural reaction to exams. The key is to put these nerves to positive use.



If anxiety seems to be getting in the way rather than helping, encourage your child to practise the sort of activities and questions they will be doing on the day of the exam. This may involve doing practice papers under exam conditions or seeing the exam hall beforehand. Your child's teachers and form tutors will be able to help with this.

Encourage them to think through what they do know and the time they have already put into studying to help them feel more confident.

Encourage exercise during exams!

Exercise can help boost energy levels, clear the mind, and relieve stress. It doesn't matter what it is - walking, cycling, swimming, football, and dancing are all effective.

Activities that involve other people can be particularly helpful.

Doing exercise like walking, cycling, swimming, and playing football can all help to relieve stress



Try not to add to the pressure

Support group Childline says lots of the children who contact them feel that most pressure at exam time comes from their family.

Try to listen to your child, give support and avoid criticism.

Before they go in for a test or exam, be reassuring and positive. Let them know that failing isn't the end of the world. If things don't go well, they may be able to take the exam again.

After each exam, encourage your child to talk it through with you. Talk about the parts that went well rather than focusing on the questions they had difficulties with. Then move on and focus on the next test, rather than dwelling on things that can't be changed.

Useful links

Some of the information and advice in this leaflet has come from the BBC website and the NHS website. For more resources that may be useful.

Childline's advice on [Exam Stress and Pressure](#)

13 tips on dealing with stress:

www.stressbusting.co.uk/how-to-deal-with-exam-stress

AWARE- a guide for young people

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/coping-with-life/exam-stress/>