



A Family's Guide to Revision

The aim of this guide is to give you support as a family as to how you can help your child revise, and ultimately be successful in their GCSEs.

We appreciate that as a parent you want to help, but that sometimes knowing how to can be a mystery. We also understand that often teenagers don't want help from their parents (or at least say they don't!)

It would be impossible for you to know the content of every GCSE your son/ daughter has taken, and nobody would expect you to learn it in order to 'test' them, so what can you actually do?

Hopefully the subject pages on our website can help. The course information included is for specific subjects, and is here as guideline for what you can do to specifically help in each subject. There are also different revision strategies that you can try at home. The tips below are more general.

Students planning their revision often split into two groups. There is one group that always put planning their revision off to the next day until they reach the night before the exam and panic that they have not done any revision. At the other extreme is the child who spends hours putting together a perfect revision timetable, carefully spending an equal amount of time on each subject and colour coding their timetable; this then becomes the child's safety blanket but almost as soon as it has been written, it is out of date and has to be repeated. The result is the young person spends more time planning than actually revising.

Planning and Assisting With Revision

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 that will make them feel in control of their work. Tips for revision planning:

- Work out a revision timetable for each subject. We have included a blank one to get you started.
- Block out all the time when your child is busy: cadets, dance lessons, sports. It is a good idea to carry on with these activities to give them a break. However, if you find that there is little time left for revision it is a starting point for you to prioritise together.
- Break revision time into small chunks - hour-long sessions with short breaks at the end of each session often work well. However, if your child



commits to doing 20 minute bursts of revision of a really high quality, with no television on and no mobile phone for texting, then three of these bursts can be far more effective than the child who spends two hours in their room with their text book open, but does not get down to any study, being distracted instead by television and phone calls.

- Make sure your child has all the essential books and materials.
- Condense notes onto postcards to act as revision prompts.
- Make sure your son/ daughter has new stationery, highlighters and pens to make revision more interesting. He/ she has received a stationery pack from school with everything they need, so you shouldn't need to buy anything extra.
- 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

- Agree the balance between work and social life and stick to the agreement. Again, flexibility is the key – if a special night comes up, agree that they can make up the work at a specified time.
- All students fall behind, feel demotivated or overwhelmed, or struggle with the balance of social, work and school demands at times. When your child feels like this, berating and threatening them will have a negative effect. Talk to them about the issues, acknowledge their feelings and adopt a sensible attitude in wanting to find a solution
- Be flexible – use the 80/20 rule. If your child is sticking to what they are supposed to be doing 80% of the time, they will be doing alright
- If your child asks for your support, encourage them by helping them to see the difficulties in perspective. Teenagers often take an all or nothing 'catastrophic' approach to difficulties – "I've messed up this essay, I might as well give up."

This can obviously be a difficult, stressful time for students, but also for their families. We hope you come out the other end unscathed!

Please remember to get in touch if there's anything you need.

Good luck from all at MHS.

