



Supporting your son's learning

Generally

Do not underestimate how much taking the time to show an interest in your son's studies helps them at all ages. Being impressed by their successes and supportive of their responses to failures shows the priority you give their learning.

If there are subjects where they are currently performing below or significantly below their target grade –

- Look at the attitude for learning comment from their teacher – is there an obvious solution in simply applying themselves to their studies a little more?
- What is their reading age score? If they are below their chronological age, could it be the case that they are finding accessing the learning a challenge? Encourage them to read every day and to review their knowledge organisers to learn the key vocabulary ahead of studying topics – this often speeds up the learning and makes it less 'heavy' and therefore more enjoyable
- Look at their Unit Test scores – particularly compared to the averages for the Year group. Are there clear topics that they did not learn well at the first attempt that they could prioritise when revising?
- Review their Microsoft Teams accounts as the teachers will have been sharing the resources from lessons on here – any areas of weaknesses could benefit from a review of these
- Access the available resources to support learning online – this article reviewed some of the best when the pandemic lockdowns were in force and has potentially useful links to use: <https://www.independent.co.uk/extras/indybest/kids/toys-activities/best-educational-websites-kids-free-sonren-bbc-bitesize-uk-a9520096.html>
- Finally – do contact your son's teacher directly via email if you have specific queries or wish to discuss their learning further. For more general queries contact their Form Tutor or Raising Standard Lead

10 GCSE revision tips for parents

1. Help them create a revision timetable

Having a revision timetable helps the student cover the content in the syllabus (exam specification). They will need to organise their timetable by including not only their GCSE subjects but also the specific topics in each subject. This is a good way to ensure they have planned their revision so they to cover all the content over time. If they are struggling with creating a revision timetable, help them with it. There is a guide on how to create revision timetables [here](#). Keep a copy of the revision timetable for yourself or just ensure that it's boldly displayed where they study. Then occasionally, check in to see that they are following the timetable.

2. Ensure they have a distraction-free study space

Exam time can be highly stressful. With huge specifications to cover over several different subjects. Plus, students getting to grips with learning how to revise. Your son will need a quiet space where they can focus. Whether it is in their bedroom, a study room or living room table.

Make sure they have a designated space they can revise during their revision hours and there's no distractions like kids running around, television on loudly or video-games. The school has the library available daily after school for this purpose.

3. Work with them to create a study routine

Create a simple plan where your son knows what activities will be happening at different days and times of the week. It could be that they have dance classes on Tuesday, a science tutor on Thursday, English and French homework on Monday for example. Having a routine helps the son instil good habits and but also means you can check in occasionally to see how to are getting on. Many students leave routines until the last year of their GCSEs, but we recommend starting this habit from as early as year 8.

4. Make sure they have all their study equipment

During exam periods, every second counts. The son will want to ensure they maximise the limited amount of time they have to revise. So, it is important that not only do they have all their equipment available, but they can easily find them. Have student books, revision books, notebook, pens, highlighters etc in a place where they can easily reach them. This really helps with organisation and focus.

5. Make sure they get a good night's rest

Sleep is more important than many of us think. In the long term, a lack of sleep is linked with disorders like obesity and Alzheimer's. In the short term, sleep helps your son process the study material they have learnt and improve their memory. [Research](#) has shown a relationship between sleep length and exam performance in students. Make sure your son has a night-time routine. They should stop working at a set time each night so they can unwind and relax before bed. You may also want to turn off phones and TV before bedtime as these can be huge distractions. The [national sleep foundation](#) recommends that teenagers should sleep between 8 to 10 hours a day.

6. Make sure they eat well

As a busy parent, it can be easy to send your son to school with a quick pack-lunch or rely on the school's canteen. But, the last year of GCSE and the months leading up to the exams are particularly important. If you give them pack-lunch for school, make sure that they have a balanced and varied meal. If you rely on them to buy their own lunch, make sure they know the importance of healthy eating so that they make correct food choices.

7. Make sure they schedule in relaxation time

With the stress around GCSEs and all the studying your son has to do, we can forget to take breaks and relax. Relaxing is very important as it will help your son achieve a calm and clear mind, recharge and get ready to start again full of energy. Make sure your son has scheduled in breaks in their revision timetable. It is important to have at least 5 to 15 minutes break between each study session, depending on how long they study for. They also need longer breaks so they

can have dinner and spend time with family and, of course, they need times during the week for extracurricular activities or for spending time with friends. Make sure these are scheduled in the timetable also.

8. Instil a growth Mindset

I am currently reading a book called “How to Ace your GCSEs”. This book categorises people having either an external or internal locus of control. People with an external locus of control tend to blame the environment (‘external factors’) such as their teachers, their school and others around them for their circumstance. People with internal locus of control take responsibility for their life and make changes within themselves to effect the change that they want.

You can guess which mindset many teenagers have. Help your son to develop the right mindset. Make it clear that there are always obstacles in life but it’s how we push to overcome them that matters.

9. Make studying fun

Sometimes, everyone in a household can get tense and anxious around exam periods but it does not have to be that way. Learning can be fun! Especially with increasing online learning tools in today’s day and age. Learn together with your son. Play educational games and quizzes with them. Kahoot is a common one used in schools that students love, but there are others. This becomes fun and exciting as you both try to improve your scores to win. Offline, you can use a flashcard that your son has created to ask them questions. If you can, try and link what’s going on in the world, on television and around us to what they are learning. And do not forget to reward them. If they have done well in a quiz or questions you have asked them give them something they like as a reward. It could be something small like their favourite drink for example. Some may respond positively to rewards and it will push them to try even harder next time.

10. You could consider hiring a tutor – but please remember the school provides interventions and your son’s teacher is also there to help/answer any queries you have!