

PARENTS GCSE SUPPORT GUIDE

Achieving Success!

Prepare and
support your child through their GCSE
Examinations

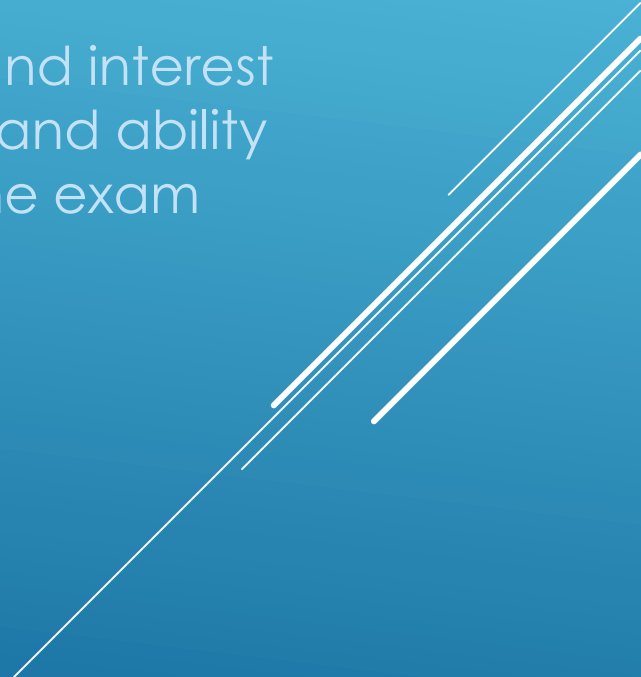
WHAT CAN MAKE THE DIFFERENCE?

HELPING YOUR CHILD PREPARE FOR THEIR GCSES ADVICE FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

- ▶ Parental support is 8 times more important in determining a child's academic success than social class. The Campaign for Learning found that parental involvement in a child's education can mean the difference between two grades at GCSE level.
- ▶ The good news is that you don't need to be an expert in any of the subjects your child chooses to make a real difference. You also don't need to give up your life and other responsibilities – you just need to know how best to spend the time you do have.
- ▶ One of the hardest demands on students is that of understanding the long-term importance of doing the best they can, and learning to shelve short-term fun (that might mean removing their phones) at times in the interest of long-term benefits (not easy even for adults).

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- ▶ Children will also differ in their levels of maturity, their ability to take responsibility for their learning, organisational skills and levels of motivation.
 - ▶ **This is where parents come in.** Your support, encouragement and interest can make a spectacular difference to your child's motivation and ability to cope with the academic and organisational demands of the exam period.
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▶ Exam Timetable

- ▶ GCSE written exams take place in **May and June 2017** (precise dates can be found on the school website).
- ▶ There are no exams during the week of the bank holiday when schools are normally on half term break.
- ▶ Taking a little time off over the bank holiday is a good idea but your son/daughter will need to do quite a bit of revision in that week.
- ▶ Please make sure they have plenty of time for it and that you have not planned to be on holiday that week.

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▶ What you can do to help

You can help by:

- ▶ Recognising how important these exams are and how much time your son/daughter will need if they are to do as well as they can.
- ▶ Ensuring they attend the extended day programme of morning/after school revision sessions and all exam cafes.
- ▶ Not asking them to do too many chores or look after younger brothers and sisters.
- ▶ Encouraging the rest of the family to help by not disturbing revision.
- ▶ Securing a quiet place for study, where their work can be safely kept.
- ▶ Encouraging relaxation time (too much study is not helpful).
- ▶ Praising hard work. Emphasising the need for plenty of sleep.
- ▶ Helping them to forget about each exam as it is finished.
- ▶ **Reminding them that it will soon be over!**

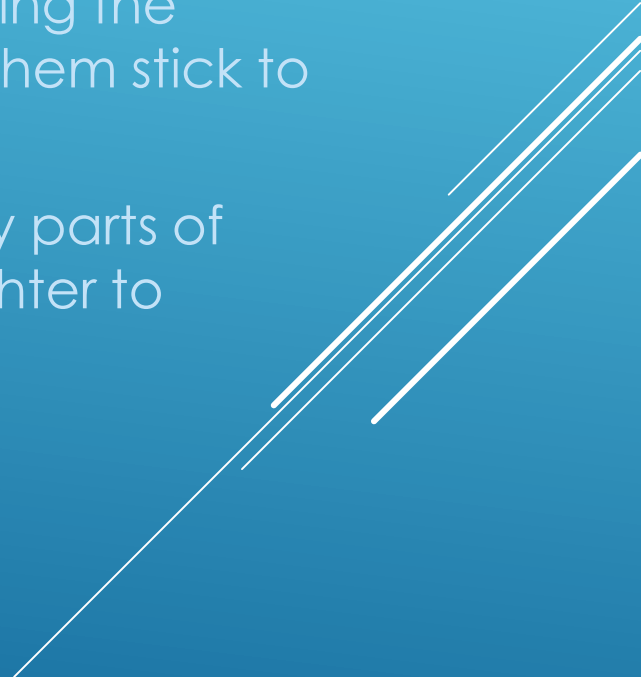
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- ▶ Encourage your son/daughter to check that they have all the notes and texts they need for revision. Ask them to talk to their teacher if they are missing any.
- ▶ Check they have made a **revision timetable** which includes the dates and times of the examinations in May and June. Also include any other important dates (such as birthdays) when you would want them to take some time off from revision. Make sure that coursework/controlled assessment deadlines are also included on the revision timetable.
- ▶ Check how they are doing by letting them explain something they have just learned. It's a good rule of thumb that if you can follow their explanation then they will be able to produce a good answer to an exam question on that topic.

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- ▶ Your son/daughter will not be able to do much revision when they are working hard to complete coursework. The timetable should be used to plan revision sessions. These should be spread out evenly so that your son/daughter is not planning to do too much all at once. Having the timetable displayed in their room is a good idea which helps them stick to the plan.
 - ▶ Encourage your son/daughter to ask for help at school on any parts of their work they do not understand. Encourage your son/daughter to persevere and to work hard in the run-up to the exams.
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▶ Useful revision tips

- ▶ You can support your son/daughter by helping them to follow these tips:
- ▶ Plan for 30-45 mins sessions. Any longer and it is likely that nothing more will sink in. Take a short break in between sessions and have a glass of water or something similar to drink.
- ▶ In the evenings after school, plan to revise one or two subjects only. Leave some time for relaxation/exercise.
- ▶ Plan to revise specific topics in each subject, not everything at once.
- ▶ Ensure that each session starts by tackling the most difficult bits.
- ▶ Plan to cover each subject several times and revisit each one near to the exams.

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- ▶ Revising with the TV or radio on or with loud music is not a good idea. Having their favourite music in the background may help.
- ▶ Reading is not generally enough. Making brief notes in either words or pictures helps them to remember.
- ▶ Have all the books they need to hand so they don't have to go off looking for
- ▶ information.
- ▶ Working with a friend can be useful because it allows them to test each other and to talk about the work.

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▶ During the exam period

Try to ensure that:

- ▶ Your son/daughter gets a good night's sleep before exams.
- ▶ They eat healthy food regularly and breakfast is eaten on the day of the exam.
- ▶ They have all the equipment they need:
 - ▶ A couple of black pens and sharp pencils;
 - ▶ A rubber and ruler;
 - ▶ A watch.
- ▶ Sometimes they may also need:
 - ▶ A calculator;
 - ▶ A protractor.
- ▶ They know the start times of every exam that day.
- ▶ You wish them well; tell them they have worked hard enough and that they can only do their best.
- ▶ You look forward to seeing them at the end of the day.

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And when it's all over

- ▶ Tell your son/daughter to relax and forget about studying for a while. Perhaps you can celebrate with a favourite activity of theirs?

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- ▶ Revision guides are available to buy from most departments at school.
- ▶ Student should ask their subject tutors for advice on which revision guides are suitable for their course.

- ▶ Other useful websites (coursework, past papers and revision)
 - ▶ www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize
 - ▶ www.essaybank.com
 - ▶ www.gcseguide.co.uk
 - ▶ www.gcse.com
 - ▶ www.hotcourses.com
 - ▶ www.schoolsnet.com
 - ▶ www.aqa.org.uk
 - ▶ www.edexcel.org.uk
 - ▶ www.ocr.org.uk