

# **HIGHCLARE SENIOR SCHOOL**



**GCSE Revision:  
a guide for parents**

## **Introduction**

We recognise that each pupil is at a different stage in their revision journey. Some are working well independently and have a clear plan of what needs to be achieved and how to get there, others still need to understand the long-term importance of achieving the best they possibly can, even if this means making short-term sacrifices. This means that the parents' role will vary considerably but all pupils will benefit from active parental support.

What happens at home during this time will be just as important as what happens at school, but many parents are uncertain of how to help their child, so we have tried to put together some ideas which we hope will be useful.

## **What is the best way to revise?**

There are many revision techniques and some may appeal more than others to your child, depending on their preferred learning styles, but it is important to mix things up and have some variety in their revision programme. Whatever their preferred approaches, the best starting point is setting out a clear revision plan.

## **Making a revision plan**

- Establish how much time they have available, then draw up a realistic timetable
- Work out how much time to devote to each subject and what topics to focus on; encourage them to focus on their weaknesses without losing sight of their strengths
- Encourage them to be specific and set achievable targets for each session e.g. 'Tuesday evening – Maths' will be less useful than 'Tuesday 7-8.45pm – Maths - complete past exam paper'

## **Highclare Virtual (VLE)**

Encourage your child to visit their subject areas of the school VLE. Each department has uploaded revision materials such as revision notes, past paper questions or links to useful websites. Teachers may also have set tasks which suggest revision activities for each subject. Parents can access all this information via the Parent Portal on the school website.

## Ideas for revising

The first thing is to recognise that reading notes is not enough, a more active revision method will be much more effective.

Visual learners may like to:

- Use post-its and stick them round their room with information to be learnt
- Summarise notes using lots of different colours
- Use highlighters to emphasise keywords
- Use a traffic light system to assess their knowledge
- Draw diagrams, pictures, timelines or mind maps
- Organise information into grids or charts
- Make colourful flashcards

Auditory learners may like to:

- Make up mnemonics or rhymes
- Make a recording and listen to it over and over
- Read and repeat information out loud to memorise
- Be the teacher – explain something you've learnt to someone else
- Discuss what they have revised with a friend or parent
- Use raps, chants, songs, music or dramatic reading

Kinaesthetic learners may like to:

- Make revision cards
- Write out material several times to learn it
- Act out topics
- Design and make matching activities
- Use gestures or movements to help memorise or demonstrate a concept
- Use internet-based quizzes or revision games
- Move round the room whilst memorising material
- Use rhythm to help concentration
- Vary activity regularly

According to research:

### **We learn:**

- 10% of what we read
- 20% of what we hear
- 30% of what we see
- 40% of what we see and hear
- 70% of what is discussed
- 95% of what we teach to someone else



**This means that the best method of learning is having to explain or teach a topic to someone else.**

## **Past examination papers**

Using past examination papers is a very useful part of any revision programme. Pupils can familiarise themselves with the format of the paper and questions. They can practise answering questions or just making brief plans of how they would structure their answers. They can then use mark schemes, model solutions or examiner's reports to check what the examiners were looking for.

Past papers can be downloaded from the examination boards' websites.

Some key skills for answering examination questions are:

- Reading questions/instructions carefully at least twice before starting to answer (and again after answering)
- checking they have answered all parts of a question
- writing answers in sufficient detail – use the number of marks as a guide
- working on their time management so they have enough time left for the last question
- proofreading answers to check what is written makes sense, and to check for spelling and grammatical errors
- avoiding unnecessarily long sentences where the meaning gets lost
- ensuring hand-writing is legible

## **How much time should be spent revising over Christmas?**

There is no right and wrong answer to this question – quality of revision time is definitely more important than quantity. Seeing revision time as task-based rather than time-based will lead to more productive use of time. Some pupils will cope well with 5+ hours of revision in a day; others will struggle to concentrate for 2 hours.

As a guide, if they were to do a minimum of 6 hours of work per subject (they will have between 8 and 10 subjects to revise) over the 18 days in the holiday, then it might look something like this:

For 8 subjects:

- Approx. 4hrs revision per day on 12 days
- 6 days off

For 10 subjects

- Approx. 5hrs revision per day on 12 days
- 6 days off

Even on 'working days' there will be plenty of time for other activities and relaxation. Reluctant revisers may need to be reminded that ultimately they are competing against thousands of pupils who will be putting in the time over the Christmas period.

## **How do I support my child with their revision?**

- Encourage your child to get started – that is the hardest part!
- Help them to set defined targets for each ‘chunk’ of revision time
- Make sure they have a quiet place to work, away from distractions from other family members, TV, mobile phone (you may need to convince them that they can live without it for an hour!)
- Encourage them to have regular breaks and time off to relax
- Provide healthy snacks and make sure they keep hydrated
- Encourage them to tell you what they have just learnt – this will really help them to remember what they have revised – listen and ask questions

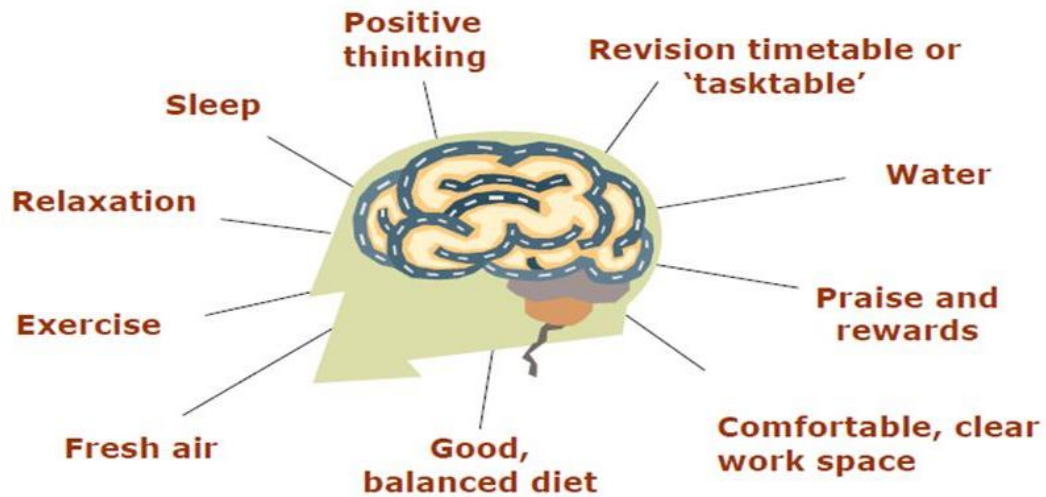
## **How do I help my child deal with exam stress?**

- Encourage them not to be frightened of examination stress; it is a perfectly normal reaction
- Help them to recognise when they are getting too stressed and take a break; having a chat with someone may help them gain perspective
- Build in relaxation time and different activities to give a complete break from revision
- Make sure they get a good night’s sleep before examinations
- Encourage them to eat healthily during examinations, and to eat healthy snacks while revising
- Avoid caffeine as it makes stress worse and dehydrates the brain

## **How can I help my child during the examination period?**

- Make sure that they get to school early (before 8.30am) so they can be organised and are not rushing at the last moment
- Make sure they have all the equipment required – black pens, calculator, drawing instruments etc
- Provide a water bottle (label removed) to keep them hydrated during examinations and make sure they eat breakfast before coming to school
- Discuss with them whether they will study best at home or in school on days without examinations

## 10 tips for keeping the brain happy!



## Useful free revision websites

<http://getrevising.co.uk/> get access to revision resources and interactive tools to make revision cards, timetables etc

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/> useful sections for every subject with quizzes to test your knowledge

<http://www.s-cool.co.uk/> GCSE revision material for different subjects

<https://www.senecalearning.com/> GCSE revision questions for different subjects

Several GCSE subjects will have recommended subject-specific websites as well.

## TAKE CHARGE (our independent learning initiative)

<b>T</b>	Think before you act	Think before you act: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't do things that would get you into trouble</li> <li>• Don't just say the first thing that comes into your head</li> <li>• Think before speaking, don't say something silly</li> <li>• Think first!</li> </ul>
<b>A</b>	Aim High	Aim High: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't be content with second best!</li> <li>• Make goals</li> <li>• Do stuff out of your comfort zone</li> <li>• Work to the best of your ability</li> <li>• Do your best in all subjects</li> </ul>
<b>K</b>	Keep trying	Keep trying: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Persevere in all you do</li> <li>• Don't give up at your first try</li> </ul>
<b>E</b>	Engage with your work	Engage with your work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on your work</li> <li>• Don't get distracted</li> <li>• Always concentrate and listen</li> </ul>
<b>C</b>	Challenge yourself every day	Challenge yourself every day: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give yourself new targets to reach</li> <li>• Don't follow the crowd</li> <li>• Set little challenges and build up to bigger ones</li> <li>• Push yourself</li> <li>• When you find something easy, try harder stuff</li> <li>• Test yourself</li> </ul>
<b>H</b>	Have faith in yourself	Have faith in yourself: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Believe in the things you can do</li> <li>• Think 'you can do it'!</li> <li>• Believe you can do anything if you try</li> <li>• Don't let others discourage you</li> <li>• Don't be negative about yourself and your qualities</li> </ul>
<b>A</b>	Achieve more together	Achieve more together: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't be self-absorbed</li> <li>• Don't just think about yourself</li> <li>• Listen as well as talk</li> <li>• Feel you are a part of a team</li> <li>• Be thoughtful of others</li> </ul>
<b>R</b>	Reflect on your learning	Reflect on your learning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revise as much as you can, listen to the teacher</li> <li>• Look back at your work to see what went wrong</li> <li>• Remember what you learn</li> <li>• Learn from your mistakes</li> <li>• Keep looking back at your work to make improvements</li> </ul>
<b>G</b>	Get organised!	Get organised!: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep your work neat and tidy</li> <li>• Make sure you're equipped for lessons</li> <li>• Don't leave things to the last minute</li> <li>• Double check your bag before coming to and leaving school</li> <li>• Be prepared</li> <li>• Get things ready the night before</li> </ul>
<b>E</b>	Enjoy your learning journey	Enjoy your learning journey: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have fun and enjoy everything you do</li> <li>• Be happy at school</li> <li>• Enjoy your education</li> </ul>