

St Mary's Catholic Academy

GCSE Revision

Advice for parents & carers

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- Speak to your child about the importance of GCSE exams in opening up future opportunities, and the importance of preparation time to doing well.
- Reward efforts made to revise.
- If possible, in the run-up to exams reduce the amount of work your child undertakes in paid jobs.
- If possible, reduce the amount of chores they do in the home or their responsibilities looking after siblings.
- If appropriate, reduce sporting, musical and other out-of-school commitments.
- Agree the balance between revision and social life, and try to stick to it.
- Ensure that the rest of the family is clear on the importance of revision for your child.
- Ensure there is a quiet place for revision, where disturbances are kept to a minimum.
- Minimise the number of distractions in the revision space, e.g. phones, access to social media, TV, gaming devices.
- Ensure your child has access to one good revision guide for each subject. Contact subject teachers for advice on which to buy if you are not sure.
- Enable relaxation time, away from the place of study.
- Emphasise the need for a good diet, hydration and plenty of sleep, all of which are crucial for concentrating and memorising.
- Remind them that revision is short-term pain for long-term gain – although it may seem like revision and exams will go on forever, it will soon be over.
- Praise, praise, praise for hard work.
- Talk to your child about what they have learnt. Get them to teach you!
- Maintain a positive attitude.
- If you have any concerns, contact subject teachers or form tutors for help and advice.

ATTENDANCE

Government research has clearly demonstrated the link between attendance at school and success at GCSE.

In 2019, pupils who did not achieve grade 4+ in English and maths GCSEs had an overall absence rate of 8.8% during Years 10 & 11, compared with a 5.2% absence rate among pupils who achieved a grade 4+ and a 3.7% absence rate among pupils who achieved a 5+ in both English and maths.

Attendance at school is the most important factor in success at GCSE.

Every lesson counts.



TOP 10 REVISION IDEAS



Create and use a revision planner to structure your sessions.



Give yourself regular breaks when you are revising.



Find a comfortable and organised space to revise in.



Be ready and prepared to revise with the right equipment.



Use blank pieces of paper to create mind maps of topics.



Limit distractions and turn off your phone.



Prioritise your time.



Set a target and stick to it.



Revise. Repeat.
Remember.



Create flash cards for every subject.



Complete past exam papers in timed conditions.



The more you put in, the more you get out!

PREPARING TO REVISE

Hints for an Ideal Revision Area

providing some of these will go a long way to helping your child...



CORE FOUR REVISION TECHNIQUES

Your child has looked at lots of different revision techniques in Revision & Practice Time. Below, are what research shows to be the **core four**:

1. Flash cards



1.

Identify knowledge

What are you creating flash cards on?

Do you have your knowledge organizer?

Use your book to look at previous misconceptions from whole class feedback.



2.

Colour coding

Use different coloured flash cards for different topics. This helps with organization NOT recall



3.

Designing

1 Question per flashcard.

Making them concise and clear.

Use a one word prompt, so that you can recall as much as you can.

No extended answer questions.



4.

Using

Write your answers down, then check. Or say your answers out loud. This really clearly shows the gaps in your knowledge.

Do not just copy & re-read.

Shuffle the cards each time you use them.

Use the Leitner system to use flash cards everyday.



5.

Feedback

How have you performed when you look back at your answers?

Is there anything you need to revisit in more detail?

Is your knowledge secure? If so, move onto applying knowledge in that area in specific extended exam questions.

2. Self quizzing



1.

Identify knowledge

Identify knowledge/content you wish to cover.



2.

Review and create

Spend around 5-10 minutes reviewing content (knowledge organisers/class notes/text book)

Create x10 questions on the content (If your teacher has not provided you with questions)



3.

Cover and answer

Cover up your knowledge and answer the questions from memory.

Take your time and where possible answer in full sentences.



4.

Self mark & reflect

Go back to the content and self mark your answers in **green** pen.



5.

Next time

Revisit the areas where there were gaps in knowledge, and include these same questions next time.

3. Mind maps



1.

Identify knowledge

Select a topic you wish to revise. Have your class notes/knowledge organisers ready.



2.

Identify sub topics

Place the main topic in the centre of your page and identify sub topics that will branch off.

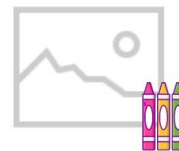


3.

Branch off

Branch of your sub topics with further detail.

Try not to fill the page with too much writing.



4.

Use images & colour

Use images and colour to help topics stick into your memory.



5.

Put it somewhere visible

Place completed mind maps in places where you can see them frequently.

4. Brain dumps



1.

Identify knowledge

Identify the knowledge/topic area you want to cover.



2.

Write it down

Take a blank piece of paper/white board and write down everything you can remember about that topic. (with no prompts)

Give yourself a timed limit (e.g. 10 minutes)



3.

Organise information

Once complete and you cannot remember any more use different colours to highlight/underline words in groups.

This categories/links information.



4.

Check understanding

Compare your brain dump to your K/O or book and check understanding.

Add any key information you have missed (key words) in a different colour.



5.

Store and compare

Keep your brain dump safe and revisit it.

Next time you attempt the same topic try and complete the same amount of information in a shorter period of time or add more information.

WELLBEING

Tests and exams can be a challenging part of school life for children and young people and their parents or carers, but there are ways to ease the stress.

1. Watch for signs of stress

These include frequent headaches and stomach aches, poor sleep, irregular eating patterns, irritability and loss of interest in activities.

2. Make sure your child eats well

Encourage them to avoid junk food and caffeine-filled energy drinks and eat healthy foods, such as fruit and vegetables.

3. Help your child get enough sleep

Most teenagers need 8-10 hours of sleep per night and 30 minutes to wind down before going to bed (no screens) is a good idea.

4. Be flexible during exams

If your child has been revising all day, do not worry about household jobs left undone, or untidy bedrooms.

5. Help them study

Ask them how you can help them to revise, and encourage them to talk about their goals in life and how revision and exams are related to them.

6. Talk to them about exam nerves

Remind your child that it is normal to feel nervous about exams and that the key is to put these nerves to positive use. Encourage them to focus on what they do know and the time they've put into studying.

7. Encourage exercise during the revision and exam period

Exercise can help to boost energy levels, clear the mind and relieve stress. Any exercise helps, and getting outside is great!

8. Do not add to the pressure

Listen to your child, give them support and avoid criticism. Be reassuring and positive. Let them know that failing is not the end of the world.

9. Make time for treats

This could be simple things like making their favourite meal or watching TV together. If you can, organise an end-of-exams treat for your child.

10. Know when to get help

Speak to your child's school - their form tutor is a good place to start. If your child's anxiety or low mood persists or interferes with their everyday life, you may need to consider a visit to the GP.

For more in-depth advice, please follow this link:

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/children-and-young-adults/advice-for-parents/help-your-child-beat-exam-stress/>