

## Supporting Study Skills

The next few months are crucial for your child as she will sit her GCSEs next year. These are important exams for your child as the grades achieved will determine what she does next in life. You will want your child to achieve the best grades that she can and this can be made possible when there is a partnership between the student, the school and parents.

There is always plenty of time for students to prepare if they are organised and work hard. There are a number of simple things that you can do as parents to help students to be as prepared as possible.

Parental support is incredibly important in determining a child's academic success. This booklet aims to tell you more about what is required for GCSE exams and how you can become involved in the revision process.

**“How can I make a difference? It's all completely different from when I was at school!”**

You don't have to be an expert in any of the subjects your daughter chooses to make a real difference – you just need to know how best to spend the time you do have to support her.

Your role may include some or all of the following:

- **Attendance officer** – making sure your daughter attends school on time and understands the importance of making the most of lesson-times. Government statistics show that there is a link between attendance, punctuality and results at GCSE. Every day lost in attendance reduces your daughter's chance of achieving her best.
- **Partner with school and child** – going to Student-Led Academic Tutorials, asking questions and finding out how you can best help your child at home.
- **Provider of the tools for homework and revision** - a quiet space for study, pens, paper and other necessities. Levenshulme High School provides many study materials too so don't worry if this isn't possible.
- **Study buddy** – showing an interest in the subjects, helping with homework (but not doing it for them), testing them when they ask you.
- **Adviser** – helping your daughter to break tasks down so that they are manageable, keeping a subtle eye on progress and celebrating achievements. Seeing a positive way forward when things go wrong.



- **Project manager** – agreeing the rules for homework or revision, helping her to make a realistic timetable, balancing work time against recreation time and reviewing the plans as necessary.
- **Go-between** - for your daughter and the school when necessary; making sure problems are addressed quickly.
- **Information provider** – helping to find copies of old exam papers, searching out websites, finding out about the subject, exam structures and content.

**The most important role you will play is that of the person who will support your daughter through the exams and be proud of her whatever happens.**



## Frequently Asked Questions

### What are GCSEs?

GCSEs (General Certificate of Secondary Education) are the main qualifications taken by 15-16 year olds in schools or colleges, usually taking 2 years to complete.

### Are GCSEs really that important?

Yes, they are. GCSEs are highly valued by schools, colleges and employers. They are the first step in allowing your daughter to move on to further education or to a career. They have been the benchmark for measuring student ability for more than 25 years.

### How are the exams assessed?

GCSEs are assessed by a combination of either exams or controlled assessments. Controlled assessments are designed to assess skills which are not effectively measured by external exams. This means that most of your daughter's exams will be taken at the end of the

course from May onwards instead of being broken down into modular exams. This means that your daughter will need to revise all the work covered in her time at secondary school in preparation for the exams. Practice GCSE exams or “mocks” or PPEs (Pre-Public Examinations) are held during Year 11 in November and March to help the students prepare for their real exams. Attendance at PPEs is also important.

### When will exams begin?

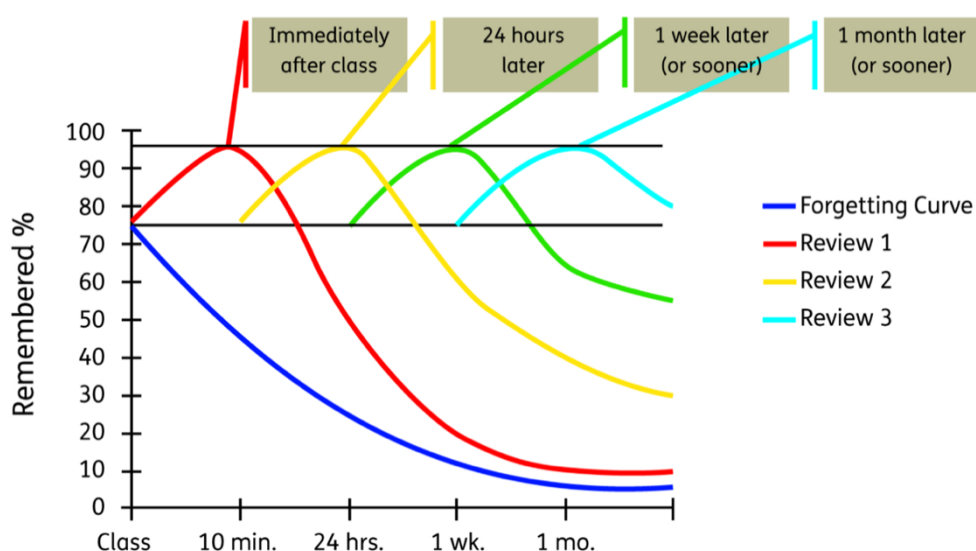
Most GCSE exams will begin from mid-May until the end of June but some foreign language orals and practical examinations may take place earlier. Your daughter will be given a timetable. Have a copy of the timetable at home not just to check dates but so that you can provide encouragement for each exam.

My daughter doesn't really like English or Maths. Does she have to take these exams? All pupils must take English (English, English language, English literature), Mathematics & Science. Your child must get a grade 4 in English or Maths otherwise she will have to continue studying the subjects until she is 18. Some employers will not consider applicants without a grade C in English and Maths and students will need these subjects to carry on studying at college.

### Is it ever too early to begin revising?

Students who do their best in the GCSE exams work hard all through school rather than relying on last minute revision. It is best for students to start revision early and to keep revising during the year by doing little but often. This will give your child time to review what she has studied and to strengthen the memory and this will avoid the panic of leaving things to the last minute.

This diagram called the Ebbinghaus Forgetting curve illustrates how information is quickly forgotten unless it is reviewed at spaced intervals.



## What can parents do to help?

If she isn't already doing so, help your daughter to start preparing for her GCSE exams now! If homework and revision are left to the last minute, this will limit your child's chance of doing their best. Over the next few months:

- Ensure that your daughter attends school regularly and is punctual. Every day lost in attendance reduces her chance of achieving her best at GCSE.
- Encourage your daughter to persevere and to begin working hard now in preparation for the exams. Check that she is keeping up with homework.
- Encourage your daughter to begin revising now!

## Revision tips for parents

- Help your daughter to make a study/revision timetable which includes the dates and times of the examinations in May and June as well as dates of controlled assessments.
- The timetable should be used to plan revision sessions. These should be spread out evenly so that your daughter is not planning to do too much all at once.
- Have the timetable displayed in her room to help her to stick to the plan.
- Ask to see your daughter's revision notes and make sure that she speaks to her teachers if she is missing any.



- Encourage your daughter to ask for help at school on any work that she does not understand.
- Encourage your daughter to attend revision sessions offered by the school, these are displayed on the VLE.
- Make sure that she has all the books needed to hand to avoid wasted time.
- Make sure that the study area is quiet and well-lit.
- Check how she is doing by asking her to explain something she has just revised.

## Revision tips for students

You can support your daughter by helping her to follow these tips and techniques:

- Do not revise for more than one hour without taking a 5-10 minute break. Have a glass of water or something similar to drink.
- Stay focused. Hours can be easily wasted on social networks and mobile phones.
- In the evenings after school, plan to revise one or two subjects for one to two hours. Leave some time for relaxation.

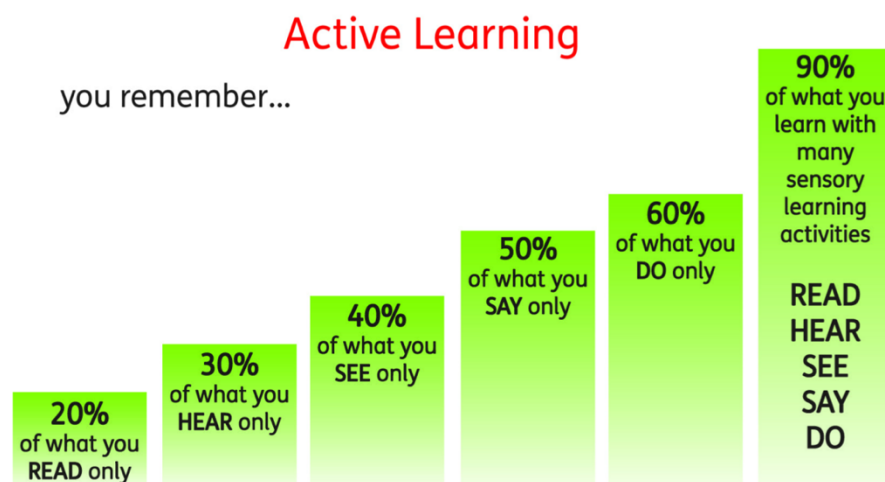
- Plan to revise specific topics in each subject, not everything at once.
- Ensure that each revision session starts by tackling the most difficult topics first.
- Plan to cover each subject several times and revisit each one nearer to the exams.
- Revising or studying with the TV or radio on or with loud music is not a good idea. Quiet background music may help some students.
- Reading is not enough. Making brief notes in either words or pictures will help students to remember.
- Answering questions from past papers, sometimes under exam conditions is a good way to test learning.
- Don't leave revision to the last minute.

## Revision techniques

Reading text over and over until you remember it may not be very effective unless it is supported by other techniques e.g. :

### Visual

- Write notes on post-its and stick on walls
- Make notes on key ideas
- Summarise notes onto card
- Highlight/circle key information
- Draw pictures diagrams, mind maps, graphs
- Display key words around your room
- Create a picture in your mind of what you have studied



## **Auditory**

- Make up rhymes, mnemonics (e.g. Never Eat Shredded Wheat – North, East, South ,West)
- Test yourself or your friends
- Get someone to test you
- Teach someone what you have revised
- Read your notes out loud or record them and play them over and over

## **Kinaesthetic**

- Create revision cards
- Act topics out
- Use gestures to demonstrate concepts

## **Parents**

Make sure that your daughter knows:

- What day the exam is on at what time it starts
- How long the exam is
- What is being tested in each exam



Before exams, try to ensure that:

- Your daughter gets enough sleep, especially the night before exams
- She is eating sensibly – especially breakfast on exam days
- She has all the equipment required:
  - pens and sharp pencils, erasers, a ruler and a watch ( mobile phones are not allowed in the exams)
  - A calculator & a protractor

Recognise the importance of GCSE exams and the preparation time needed to do as well as possible.

- Reward your daughter's efforts to revise.
- Reduce the number of chores that she has to do when exams start.
- Make sure that the whole family respects the importance of keeping disturbances to a minimum.
- Be sensitive to the pressure and stress that your daughter may be experiencing.

Encourage her to speak to you about it.

- Make sure that time is built in for exercise and recreation.
- Respect her growing independence. Ask her how you can best support her.
- Help her to keep things in perspective.

## **School Contacts**

Get in touch with school if you would like more help or advice. A list of key contact can be found on the school website.

Remember, how you approach the next few months can have a real impact on your daughter's future. Studies show that high parental interest is linked with better exam results than for children whose parents show no interest. What will you do to give your daughter the best chance of achieving success?

## **Websites**

### **Bitesize**

[bbc.co.uk/bitesize](http://bbc.co.uk/bitesize)

### **Get revising**

[getrevising.co.uk](http://getrevising.co.uk)

### **S-cool**

[s-cool.co.uk](http://s-cool.co.uk)

### **Revision world**

[revisionworld.co.uk](http://revisionworld.co.uk)

### **Study Maths.co.uk**

[studymaths.co.uk](http://studymaths.co.uk)

### **GCSE – pod**

[gcsepod.co.uk](http://gcsepod.co.uk)

### **My GCSE Science**

[my-gcsescience.com/revision/core](http://my-gcsescience.com/revision/core)

### **GCSE Science**

[gcsescience.com](http://gcsescience.com)

### **revision notes for Chemistry and Physics**

[bbc.co.uk/schools/parents](http://bbc.co.uk/schools/parents)