

Heading towards our Exams.....

# KTS Parent guide to supporting their child

Some simple advice!

# Introduction

- Exams, particularly important public exams, are **stressful** for students and probably even more for their parents
- It is not easy to watch your children suffer and not to know what you can do to help

# The students who do best in exams.....

- have revised thoroughly and carefully
- feel confident
- have parents who take an interest in their revision

# How much revision should my child be doing?

- We recommend **two hours** per evening and two hours on a Saturday and Sunday
- A **revision timetable** should be drawn up – this should already be happening
- Revision should take the form of short bursts. For example - 45 minute slots, with short breaks

# Revision timetable – sample day!

Date	Subject	Times	What
08 04 15	Physics	4.00 - 4.30	Three exam questions
	English	4.45 – 5.30	Read R+J Act 1-3
	RE	5.45 – 6.00	Learn 5 key quotations
	Maths	7.00 – 7.20	Exam questions
	Biology	7.30 – 8.15	Make notes - Circulation
	French	8.30 – 9.00	Revise traffic and camping
	All	9.00 – 9.05	Ten things I learned today

# So parents, what can you do?

## Do.....

- Offer help as a tester; as a reader; as a source of knowledge; as a buyer (of equipment, books, rewards)
- Make them feel you are on their side
- Organise **non study activities** for them
- Encourage them with praise and rewards
- Work out time limits with them
- Make their **environment** revision friendly

# So parents, what should you not do?

## Do not.....

- Force them to revise in ways you think best
- Get involved in their stress; **don`t shout back**
- Make **comparisons** with other students, or yourself at a younger age
- Give them permission to do badly!!
- Do not .... believe the revision **untruths**

# Untruths your child may tell you about revision.

- **It's too early to start yet. It isn't.** The most effective revision starts early and continues at a reasonable pace
- **It's too late to start now.** It's never too late to start. Better to start early but better late than never
- **No-one else has started revising.** Yes they have. They just aren't telling you. And if afterwards they tell you they got an 'A' without revision they're just boasting about how clever they are.
- **You can't revise for...(English, Maths, RE, ICT etc, etc).** Yes you can. There's always something to do; some way of helping you understand or know more.

# More untruths your child may tell you about revision.

- **You don't need to do well in... (English, Drama, RE, ICT etc).** Employers and Universities prefer to see consistent results. An odd 'D' or 'E' suggests someone who is inclined to work hard only if they feel like it.
- **Revision is boring because it's just sitting staring at a book.** No, it isn't. The best revision is active lively and varied. Remember Tim Foot?
- **I can revise and listen to music/watch the television at the same time.** Not if it requires concentration.

# Time Management

Some quotations .....

- Some is better than none; a lot is better than too much.
- It is unwise to do too much on one day and none on another.
- Your **concentration span** is constantly changing. It depends on the time of day, what you're doing and what you've done before. Half an hour is an accepted average before you need a change of activity. Sometimes it's ten minutes, sometimes three hours.
- **Breaks are essential**, even a short 20 minute break every 90 minutes will refresh your child's mind.
- Walking, exercise and fresh air are good for the brain. Students always forget that.

# Active Learning

- **Variety, novelty and activity** are the friends of the reviser. They keep the brain alert and fend off the worst enemy: stress-induced boredom.
- Sitting reading and re-reading a book or a note book is often the **worst form of revision**; the mind blurs, the pages drift together, anxiety about the exam takes over the mind. But too many students think it's the only revision that counts and so waste far too much time looking at pages instead of revising.

# Variety of Activity is Vital – Five possible activities

1. Reduce everything you know on a topic to 500 words, then to 200, then to 50, then to 10. Write those **ten on a card** for the morning of the exam
2. Use the **internet** or buy revision guides
3. Spend some time each day on **note learning**. It gets easier.
4. Revise with a **friend** – it can help to question each other
5. Watch **BBC Bitesize**

# **Variety of Activity is Vital – Five more possible activities**

1. Do exam questions from past papers (for an hour or ten minutes or ...)
2. At the end of each day, write everything you have learned in very quick bullet points
3. Invent and learn mnemonics
4. Make mind maps, put them on your wall and look at them every day
5. Make flow charts, diagrams, graphs, drawings as well as notes

# Managing stress

- Exams are stressful. So is revision. There is a constant fear of being found out, of not being good enough, of opening an exam paper and finding you can't answer any of the questions

# Some things parents can do to reduce stress.

- Encourage them. Point out **what they're good at**. Tell them daily what they do well. Make mention of past success, current success with revision, success in previous exams.
- Be **relentlessly optimistic**
- If you look at their work, do not point out their errors, point out **what they've done well**
- Get them to invite their friends round. Shared revision makes it easier and more fun.
- Every now and then do something together you've never done before: go to a theme park, try sailing...
- Don't join in the general anxiety; be a picture of **serene confidence**

# Environment and diet

- A healthy diet, important always, becomes vital at times of pressure. Fresh vegetables, fruit and water are the most important. It is best to reduce sugar and fat. Fish is supposed to be good for the brain.
- Students need a place to revise which is quiet, calm and comfortable. Probably the most important is quiet.

The Calm, productive space.... (No media devices in the area – unless as a **disciplined** part of the revision)



# The place



or



Be organised in your work and your place of work!

# So, as parents

- There is a great deal you can do. You can't revise for them and however much you'd like to, you can't take the exams for them, but you can be invaluable in making the exam process smooth, calm and successful.
- Please do contact the school if you would like any extra support