

Biddenham International School & Sports College

Revision Tips for Parents

(How to help your child during the build up to exams)

Your child will get the best results from their revision if they develop good revision habits.

Help them to plan revision in 20 - 40 minute sessions and encourage them to take a short break between each session. **They should also follow the tips below:**

1. Children should have access to a **dedicated quiet space to study** with good natural light or lighting best for homework and revision, with no distractions. It is ideal if everyone in the home understands the importance of 'study time' and respects it as a quiet space.
2. Ensure that your child has **one evening a week away from their studies**. It is also important that they take **regular breaks** during the study periods.
3. **Healthy snacks** are essential for breaks between study periods. Try to avoid sugary snacks and junk food.
4. Try to agree a **revision timetable** with your child. Encourage them to tell you what they are studying; this can help reinforce the information.
5. Offer to test them, again this helps to **reinforce the information**. Check how they are doing by allowing them to explain something they have just learnt. If they are able to give a good explanation they are likely to be able to give a good answer in the exam.
6. **Your child's welfare** is always of paramount importance and most importantly during exam periods when stress and anxiety levels can be high. Reassure your child that their welfare is more important than their results.
7. Encourage your child to **study at a time when they are suited to learn**. Some children work best in the morning, others the afternoon or evening.
8. **Sleep is vital**, your child is still growing and developing, they should be aiming for eight hours sleep; ensure they go to bed at a reasonable time.
9. **Know their exam timetable**.
10. Ensure they have the **right equipment** for their exams and a bottle of **water for hydration**.
11. **Mobile phones** must be handed in or turned off in students bags, students can be failed from an exam if their phone goes off.
12. If your child has a **medical condition**, make sure that the school knows about it. There are special considerations for some conditions.
13. If there is a **family crisis**, for example divorce or bereavement, again ensure that your child's teacher knows about it, since the additional stress can affect your child's exam performance.
14. Studying with the TV, radio or loud music on is not a good idea; quiet music with no words may help in the background.
15. **Working with friends** can be useful as it allows discussion of the work and a chance to test each other.
16. Having a **timetable** displayed in their room is a good idea as it will help them to stick to the plan.
17. Make sure that your child is using the internet to study and not as a resource to give the appearance of study!
18. Tell them that they can only try their best and even if they do not do as well as you had hoped, you still love them just as much.

Equipment List Needed for Exam:

- 2 HB Pencils
- Range of coloured pencils
- Sharpener
- Rubber
- 30cm Ruler
- Set Square (60x30x90)
- Set Square (45x45x90)
- Compass
- Black biro x 2
- Black outline

Revision Tips for Students

1. **Where to study:** Creating good conditions to study in can help you make the most of the time you spend revising. Here are some suggestions:
 - Find a quiet place to study and make sure you are sitting comfortably.
 - Make sure your desk is well lit.
 - Keep background noise to a minimum.
 - Avoid studying in an area where there will be distractions (like television!).
 - Have everything you need to do your revision to hand before you start.
2. **How to study:** There is no 'right way' to revise, as long as the method you choose enables you to gain a solid grasp of key facts and consolidate your knowledge. Some students are happy to read their classroom notes from start to finish, others prefer to simplify the information as much as possible, turning everything into skeleton notes, diagrams or mnemonics. In practice, most students find that mixing techniques suits the varied nature of the subjects being revised, and provides essential variety when studying.

Turn your notes into revision tools:

- Write ideas and facts on to cards to use as 'prompts'.
- Create memory aids such as diagrams or mnemonics (e.g. initial letters to make a word you need to remember or SMART objectives: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Targets). These will help you remember key facts.
- Write key facts/notes out and display these around the house where you will see them.
- Record yourself reading notes to listen to.
- Study with a friend and test each other's knowledge, but remember you are meeting to revise rather than to chat!
- Work through past question papers - and use a watch to time them so that you can practise timing your answers.
- Choose study and revision guides sensibly. It is not hard to find help with revision - as well as established published revision guides, there are hundreds of websites offering help and advice. The problem is not how to find such help, but how to judge which is the best source for your needs. Save valuable time and get recommendations from your teachers.
- Remember course notes are also a valuable source of extra help.
- Keep yourself more alert by changing revision methods during a session. For instance, try switching from note taking to memorising; from reading to asking someone to test you.
- Attend any revision classes that your teachers may be running at school and get their advice on revision methods.

3. **Look after yourself:** Sometimes revision can become a competition - who stayed up latest, who worked longest, who's worrying the most. But the more tired you are the less efficiently you will work. You need to rest as well as study, eat well, drink lots of water and make sure you pace yourself. Do not rush, and equally do not over-revise by doing too much too soon.
4. **Revision plan:** The top tip for successful revision is to make a plan; otherwise it is easy to waste your precious revision time. We recommend that you start your revision at least six weeks before your exams begin. It is helpful to look at your exam dates and work backwards to the first date you intend to start revising:
 - List all your exam subjects and the amount of time you think you will need for each one. It is unlikely that the amounts will be equal. Many people find it advisable to allocate more time to the subject or topics they find the most difficult.
 - Draw up a revision plan for each week.
 - Fill in any regular commitments you have first and the dates of your examinations.
 - Use Revision Checklists or Syllabuses for each subject as a starting point. Look at what you need to know and try to identify any gaps in your knowledge. (A good way of doing this is to look at the results of past papers or tests you have worked through).
 - Divide your time for each subject into topics based on the units in the revision checklist or syllabus, and make sure you allow enough time for each one.
 - Plan your time carefully, assigning more time to subjects and topics you find difficult.
 - Revise often; try and do a little every day.
 - Plan in time off, including time for activities which can be done out in the fresh air. Take a five or 10 minute break every hour and do some stretching exercises, go for a short walk or make a drink.
 - You may find it helpful to change from one subject to another at 'break' time, for example doing one or two sessions of Maths and then changing to Geography, or alternating a favourite subject with a more difficult one. It helps to build in some variety.
 - Write up your plan and display it somewhere visible.
 - Adjust your timetable if necessary and try to focus on your weakest topics and subjects.
 - Do not panic; think about what you can achieve, not what you cannot. Positive thinking is important!
5. **Last minute revision tips:** Although time may be short, you can still make a difference to your grade. Try and prioritise; do what you can.
 - Use your revision tools (prompts, diagrams etc) to check final facts.
6. **Keep calm** and consolidate your existing knowledge rather than trying to learn new topics.
7. **Do not stay up all night** revising; being overtired will not help you to do your best.
8. **Dealing with exam nerves:** It is natural to feel nervous before an examination. The more prepared you feel, the easier it will be to conquer your fears.
 - Create a revision plan to help you feel in control of the process.
 - Plan your work carefully around the topics you need to focus on. Being aware of gaps in your knowledge can create nerves, but having a plan of how you will fill these will make you feel better.
 - Find out what is involved in the exam:
 - Where and when it will take place.
 - How much time is allowed?
 - How many questions you need to answer.
 - Think positively.
 - Keep the exam in context - even if you do badly, there will be other options open to you.
 - Allow yourself some fun-time each day to relax.
 - Eat sensibly - your brain cells need energy to function well.
 - Make sure you drink plenty of water to avoid becoming dehydrated. Dehydration makes you tired and reduces concentration.

9. **Exam tips - sitting the exam:** Be prepared; find out what is involved in each of the examinations that you are going to sit.
- Organise yourself the night before and get plenty of sleep.
 - Check you have the correct equipment with you before you leave the house (pens pencils, ruler, scientific calculator, etc).
 - Do take a watch or clock so that you can time your answers.
 - Leave for the exam in plenty of time.
 - Look through the paper first and mark difficult questions/initial thoughts.
 - Select the questions that will best enable you to demonstrate your knowledge to the examiner.
 - Look at the marks available and read the questions carefully, following instructions given in the paper (e.g. to show all workings, word limits etc).
 - Use the information provided on the paper (the answer is often nearly all there).
 - Pace yourself and allow enough time to answer all the required questions.
 - Write as neatly as possible to help the examiner to mark your work. Marking untidy writing is difficult.
 - For longer answers, take a few minutes before you begin to produce a structured plan of what you are going to include in each section.
 - Allow yourself ten minutes at the end to read through your answers and correct any mistakes.
 - Cross out anything you do not want the examiner to read (e.g. an earlier answer to a question).
10. **Exam tips - after the exam:** It is easy to fall in to the trap of wondering how well you performed and to discuss this with your fellow students. Your time would be better spent looking ahead to your next examination.
- Do not panic - you will not be the only student who is anxious about their answers.
 - Do not compare your answers with those of other students - this can create negative feelings.
 - Have some fresh air and food and take time to relax before you start revising.
 - Do not rush to your textbooks to check your answers - there is no point at this stage.
 - Focus on the next exam and how you might improve your exam technique.
 - Have a quick look at your revision plan. Do you need to adjust it?
 - **Think positively.**

HOW LONG

Plan to revise for at least one hour a day in the lead up to your exams.

20 minutes - break - 20 minutes - break - 20 minutes

Last minute tips:

1. Make a revision timetable and stick to it.
2. Use different revision methods.
3. Use extra revision time e.g. on the toilet!
4. Do not leave it to the last minute.
5. Revise in distraction free environments.
6. Attend school revision sessions.
7. Work hard - earn your planned breaks.
8. Use colour and diagrams in revision notes.
9. Get enough sleep before the exam.
10. Condense notes onto revision cards.