



Saint John Houghton  
Catholic Voluntary Academy

# Surviving GCSEs! (A Guide for Parents)

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# What's your goal?



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# The Study Space

- It is essential that your child has a 'space' to work
- Light, bright, airy, quiet, cool but not cold
- Is there a room in your house that fits this criteria?
- Doesn't necessarily have to be your own desk etc...kitchen table, school, library, Costa!
- What's important is that they have their own space
- The bed is not ideal! – Linked to sleep in your mind – Your study space needs to be somewhere that your mind links to work
- **ACTION – Ensure your child has an appropriate place to study**





# Time

- Time is the enemy this year! – 25 school weeks left at SJH – less than 130 days! (eeeeeeeeek!)
- How your child uses every day, hour, minute, second is absolutely crucial!
- How good are they at using their time. Do they plan their time? Are they effective?
- Weekly planner/Calendar/Online revision timetable
- **ACTION - Ask them to talk you through their planning for the mocks (w/c 05.10.18)**



# Money



- There are going to be key pieces of equipment that are going to be needed for revision this year
- Stationery (Pens (black), pencils, notebooks, files, post-it notes, etc)
- Revision guides – Does your child have them all? Are there any they need?
- You may need to budget for this
- Don't be embarrassed if there are things they need, e.g. revision guides – Talk to school
- **ACTION – Talk to your child about what they need for revision**





# Managing Stress



- The ability to manage their emotions will be a key factor in how successful your child is this year
- Stress does different things to different people: cry, avoid, behave badly, change in mood,
- There are some easy practical steps that can be taken to help them to avoid/manage stress
  1. Get them organised – Have a plan!
  2. Create a positive study environment
  3. Develop a strong support network
  4. Avoid major life changes
  5. Improve your health and fitness
- **ACTION – Talk to your child. Are they ‘stressed out?’ How are they coping with the mocks? This will be a good indicator for the real exams. Talk to school if necessary!**



# Major life changes

- Moving House
- Being dumped by the boyfriend/girlfriend!
- Starting a new relationship
- Taking up new work/Getting a Saturday job
- Taking lead roles
- Joining a new sports team
- **Action: Don't move house before August. Don't book any holidays before the end of the exam period.**



# Health and Fitness - Exercise



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- Managing their health is crucial for your child to be successful
- Make them get some exercise!
- They will feel amazing! – Endorphins
- Also great for tiredness – Exercise will help them to sleep
- Exercise gives them energy
- Great stress reliever
- Run – it's free! Trainers, Shorts, T-shirt, Headphones!
- **Action: Speak to your child about exercise – HEALTH WARNING, THIS MAY NOT GO WELL!**



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# Health and Fitness – Food and Drink



- Good balanced diet will help your child to stay healthy
- Plenty of fresh fruit and veg will help
- Best Brain foods – Berries (Strawberries etc, Oranges, Nuts, Green Veg, Broccoli)
- No 'I don't like veg' excuses...
- Stay hydrated – 2 litres per day – Absolutely crucial – avoid dehydration, headaches etc...
- Helps concentration
- Monitor how much they are drinking – Are they drinking two litres per day?
- **Action: Talk to your child about diet and hydration**

# Health and Fitness – Sleep



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- The correct amount of sleep is crucial for a 16 year old!
- At least 8 hours per night
- Good sleep pattern is crucial no 1, 2, 3am bedtimes
- Limit screen time before bed, especially if they struggle to get to sleep – Blue Light can be turned off on most devices. Reduce this 2 hours before bed
- Room should be cool, but not cold
- Hot milky drink will help them to sleep! – Increases melatonin that helps us to sleep
- Let them sleep in at the weekend!
- Team Sky – Sleep on your own pillow! Good sleep = high performance!
- **Action: Talk to your child about ‘good sleep.’ Are they getting good sleep? Why/why not? Devices off an hour before bed?**



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# Having a positive attitude...

- 'Limiting Beliefs' are one of the most significant factors in exam success
- Students often think they 'can't do' a subject – This is a nonsense! They may not get a 9, but they can do any subject!
- 'Whether you think you can or you think you can't, you are probably right!' – Henry Ford

**Limiting Belief:** I can't do Maths

**Positive Response:** I have to work harder in Maths than my other subjects. I need to work on the skills I need to be successful. By following the advice of my teacher and studying hard, I can achieve a higher grade



# HAVE A WORD WITH YOURSELF!

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- Does your child think positively or negatively? – Get a handle on this!
- It is possible to strengthen your child's brain's ability to focus on the positive!
- Encourage them to think positive rather than negative! 'I'm going to do really well in this assessment!'
- If you are negative, they will mirror your attitude
- Rather than focusing on the assessment when they scored the lowest score, focus on the one when they achieved their highest
- Give them random moments of positivity – A surprise after the mocks, for example
- Celebrate their successes in the mocks etc...
- Stop them from criticising themselves – Stop them minimizing their results/playing small – Stop the 'anyone can do that' attitude
- Stop them comparing themselves to others
- Stop 'all-or-nothing' thinking! – I'm going to fail everything!

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# Helping your child to succeed:

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- **Health Warning: They may not want this**
- They all work in different ways
- In some cases, limit their revision. Look after their health!
- Others need a push, or even a rocket!
- Quizzing is a brilliant way for your child to revise. They could write 20 questions they must know the answers to and ask you to quiz them repetitively. The repetitive nature of this makes it an excellent way to revise
- Test them on keywords/facts/dates, etc
- 'Check up' on them – For revision to be effective they should be producing something – Notes, summaries, mind maps, cue cards, PowerPoint presentations – Take an interest and ask them what they have been revising
- Re-reading revision guides/exercise books = least effective version of revision
- Ask to see their revision plan – Build in the things they already do, e.g. football, dancing etc.... Every hour of free time should be accounted for
- Reward them when they work hard! Reward effort, not ability!
- Go easy on them, but maintain your boundaries!



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