

SAFEGUARDING AND WELLBEING



The Sutton Academy

Issue 5

Coping with Exams Advice for Students



Try breaking it up into chunks and creating a daily timetable

so you know what you want to study when. This can make revision feel less overwhelming and much more manageable.



Be realistic about what you can achieve in a day

An unrealistic revision plan won't help you and will put you under unnecessary stress.



Make sure you take regular breaks from studying

Your brain cannot concentrate for hours at a time.



Not everyone studies the same way

Some people prefer to read, others find it helpful to make notes or draw diagrams, while others prefer to talk things through. Do what works for you.



Focus on you and don't compare yourself to others

It can be really stressful when you think everyone is doing better than you, spending more time on revision than you, or just not stressing out as much as you. But we're all different and that's ok. Remember, your friends don't have their results guaranteed – life is unpredictable – and they might well be feeling just as worried as you are.



Advice for Parents

Make sure your child eats well

A balanced diet is vital for your child's health, and can help them feel well during exam periods.

Some parents find high-fat, high-sugar and high-caffeine foods and drinks, such as energy drinks, cola, sweets, chocolate, burgers and chips, make their children hyperactive, irritable and moody.

Where possible, involve your child in shopping for food and encourage them to choose some healthy snacks.



Help your child get enough sleep

Good sleep improves thinking and concentration. Most teenagers need 8 to 10 hours' sleep a night. Learn more about how much sleep children need.

Allow half an hour or so for your child to wind down between studying, watching TV or using a computer and going to bed, to help them get a good night's sleep.

Cramming all night before an exam is usually a bad idea. Sleep will benefit your child far more than a few hours of panicky last-minute study.



As always, if you have any issues around your child's mental health and well-being, please contact a member of the safeguarding team, or your child's Head of Year.



Talk about exam nerves

Remind your child that it's normal to feel anxious. Nervousness is a natural reaction to exams. The key is to put these nerves to positive use.

If anxiety is getting in the way rather than helping, encourage your child to practise the activities they'll be doing on the day of the exam. This will help it feel less scary.

For example, this may involve doing practice papers under exam conditions or seeing the exam hall beforehand. School staff should be able to help with this.

Help your child face their fears and see these activities through, rather than avoiding them.

Encourage them to think about what they know and the time they've already put into studying to help them feel more confident.

Be flexible during exams

Be flexible around exam time. When your child is revising all day, do not worry about household jobs left undone or untidy bedrooms.

Staying calm yourself can help. Remember, exams do not last forever.

Help them study

Make sure your child has somewhere comfortable to study. Ask them how you can support them with their revision.

Help them come up with practical ideas that will help them revise, such as drawing up a revision schedule or getting hold of past papers for practice.

To motivate your child, encourage them to think about their goals in life and see how their revision and exams are related to them.

Do not add to the pressure

Support group Childline says many children who contact them feel that most pressure at exam time comes from their family.

Listen to your child, give them support and avoid criticism.

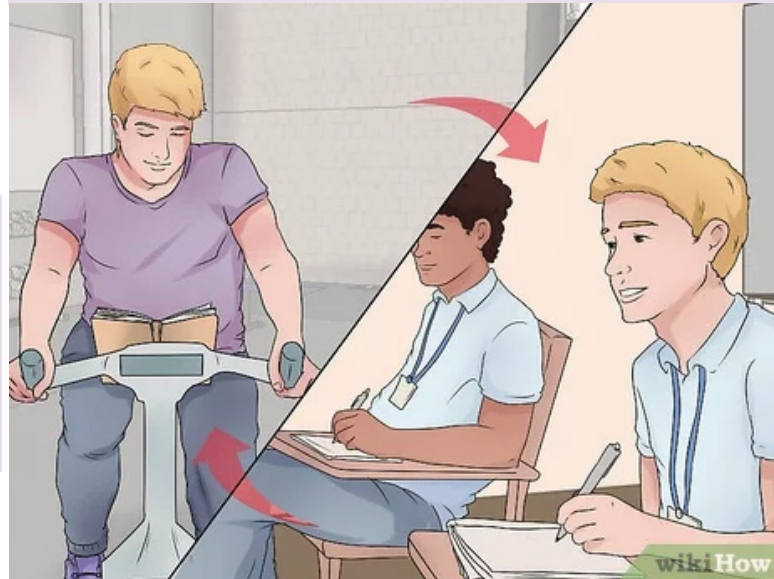
Before they go in for a test or exam, be reassuring and positive. Let them know that failing is not the end of the world. If things do not go well they may be able to take the exam again.

After each exam, encourage your child to talk it through with you. Discuss the parts that went well rather than focusing on the questions they found difficult. Then move on and focus on the next test, rather than dwelling on things that cannot be changed.

Encourage exercise during exams

Exercise can help boost energy levels, clear the mind and relieve stress. It does not matter what it is – walking, cycling, swimming, football and dancing are all effective.

Activities that involve other people can be particularly helpful.



Make time for treats

With your child, think about rewards for doing revision and getting through each exam.

Rewards do not need to be big or expensive. They can include simple things like making their favourite meal or watching TV.

When the exams are over, help your child celebrate by organising an end-of-exams treat.

