

Revision Handbook

*A guide to support your child with GCSE
Revision and Exams*



Shaping Lives, Transforming Communities.

Name: _____

Form: _____

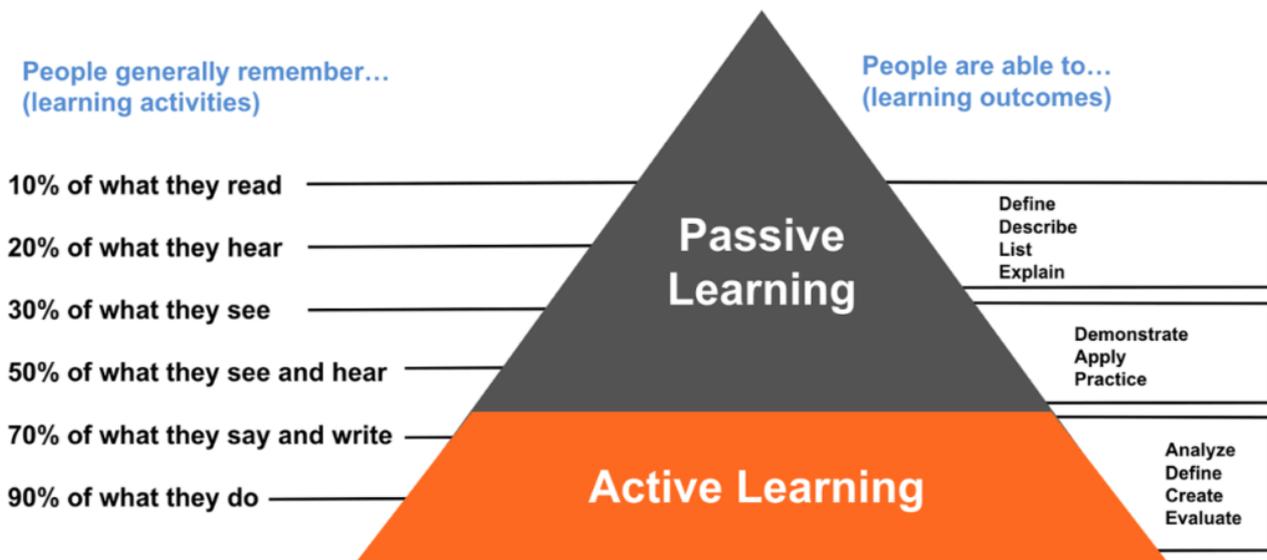
GCSEs are the gateway to the next step in your child's future. Support from parents and carers has a massive impact on stress levels and on grades.

This booklet should give you some ideas about how!

What does revision mean?

Firstly, and most importantly, revision does not mean looking at books and reading.

Revision is only effective if there is some kind of interaction with the material concerned; you need to do something with it!



How can you make a difference?

Parental support is eight times more important in determining a child's academic success than social class. The Campaign for Learning found that parental involvement in a child's education can mean the difference between an 9 (A*) and an 'also-ran' at GCSE.

The good news is that you don't need to be an expert in any of the subjects your child chooses to make a real difference. You also don't need to give up your life and other responsibilities – you just need to know how best to spend the time you do have.

One of the hardest demands on students is that of understanding the long-term importance of doing the best they can, and learning to shelve short-term fun at times in the interest of long-term benefits (not easy even for adults).

Children will also differ in their levels of maturity, their ability to take responsibility for their learning, organisational skills and levels of motivation.

This is where parents come in. Your support, encouragement and interest can make a spectacular difference to your child's motivation and ability to cope with the academic and organisational demands of the exam period.

Use the planning guide and revision methods to **help support your child to achieve their ambition.**

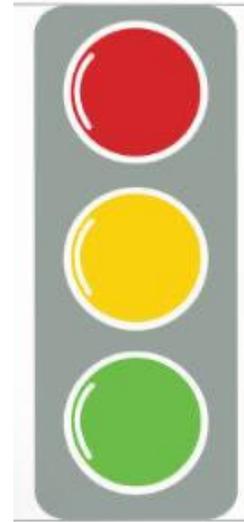
Revision Methods

Traffic lights

Highlight your notes in terms of how confident you are with different parts.

- Red/pink = priorities for revision; things you really don't understand
- Orange/yellow = things you have some understanding of
- Green = things you are confident about

Once you've done this, you can apply other revision strategies to the things you have put in pink/red.



Write mnemonics or rhymes

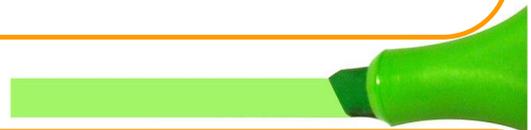
Writing these for yourself can help you to remember sequences of information, especially when they need to be in a particular order.

Colour coding

Come up with a colour-coding system for your notes. For example: key words are in one colour, case studies in another, positive/negative points in another. You can also apply this to mind maps or revision cards.

Do the Youtube thing!

Other students have done GCSEs in the past, and many of them are creative geniuses! There are a huge array of revision videos available, many of which include memorable songs.



Work with a friend

Do your revision with someone else who wants to revise the same thing. You can help each other out if you're stuck, and test each other.

Write summaries

Write a summary of each section of your exam; condense an entire set of notes into one A5 set of bullet points, for example.



Make recordings

Record yourself saying key things and play them back. Mobile phones all have a voice-recorder function, so you can listen to them wherever you like.



Revision Methods

Revision cards

Put a simple piece of information and/or a picture on one side of the card, and a full explanation/definition on the other. This is particularly useful for revising:

- Key people or dates
- Formulae
- Key words

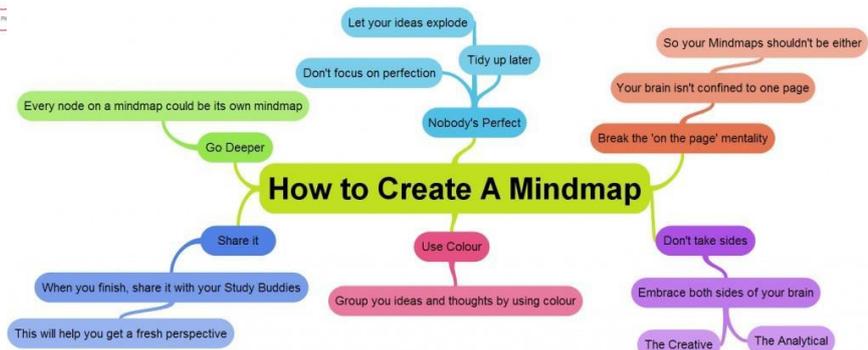
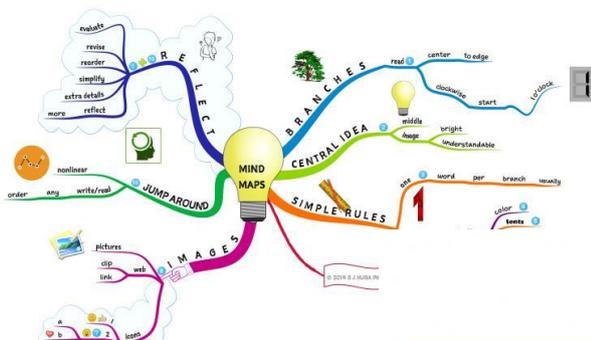
There are also some fantastic flashcard Apps on the Appstore and in the Android Marketplace – free and paid. Some even allow you to draw pictures. Just search for 'flash cards'.



Mindmaps

Put the main point (E.g. 'human reproduction') in the middle of the sheet. Coming out of this, put subdivisions for this topic.

Include pictures, diagrams, colours, arrows to connect things.



Post-it notes

Write short, sharp notes about things you find it hard to remember, and stick them in places where you know you will look (light switches, the kettle, by the toilet roll...).



Revision Methods

Low Stakes Testing

Research shows that students who regularly test themselves will remember more! Low stakes testing involves a parent or guardian testing their child on what they have learnt.

For example, use flash cards (explained above) to test your Childs knowledge on a topic. BBC Bitesize also offers quizzes!

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/levels/z98jmp3>



Main exam boards past papers:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/exams-administration/exams-guidance/find-past-papers-and-mark-schemes>

<https://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/past-paper-finder/>

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/exams/past-papers.html>

Past Paper Questions

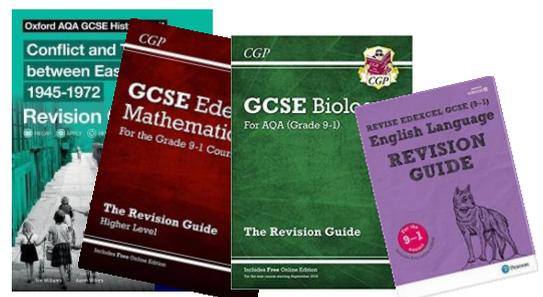
Step 1 – Answer question using the mark scheme and notes.

Step 2 – Answer question with some notes or textbook.

Step 3 – Under timed conditions answer the question with no support and then mark.

Use your Revision Guides!

Many subjects have given students revision guides for their GCSEs. Use them! They are full of fantastic notes, exam styled questions and revision tips. You can also buy second hand ones off Amazon.



Revision Methods

Draw up a lastminute.com sheet

Make an A5 piece of paper that contains a really concise list of things that you absolutely *cannot* forget. Take this with you on the day of the exam so that it's the last thing you see before you go into your exam.



Key words

Developing the right vocabulary for each subject is absolutely **crucial**. Without it, understanding exam questions is really hard, and writing answers that give top marks is also really hard. It is therefore a good idea to have key word lists, revision cards and conversations that involve these key words.

Harness your inner geek

Set reminders in your mobile phone; this is ideal for remembering small bits of simple information, like dates and names. If the same reminder goes off seven times, it will become a part of your long-term memory. You can have several reminders going at a time.



MUST DO

Must Do / Know – Check List Questions and Tasks

- Do I have a revision space set up just right for me?
- Do I have all the exam dates, times and exam boards – write Exam Timetable
- Work backwards and create revision time table
- What revision resources do I need to purchase?
- Are there any revision guides I need?
- Are there any set texts I need to buy / read / memorise?
- Do I have contact for key teachers and staff I might need help from?
- Have I got a good range of quality food and snacks to feed my brain?
- Have I got plenty of breaks and activity planned around my revision?
- Have I got some treats planned for the end of exams?
- Have I got the support around me I need?



Revision Methods

Seneca learning

<https://senecalearning.com/en-GB/>



Seneca learning is a fantastic online learning website which all students have access too.

On the site their teachers can set them work which is marked automatically. This gives students immediate feedback and allows them to identify gaps in their knowledge. This can then be used to help structure their revision. If you do not have a Seneca class page ask your teacher!



MathsWatch is the **complete** online Maths platform that makes learning available to your children 24/7 from anywhere in the world. All students at the Halley have access to it.

Tassomai

<https://www.tassomai.com/>

Students learn through quizzes and short videos, using our mobile app or other online devices. Content is broken down into bite sized chunks and tailored to each user, as our intelligent algorithm works out what students know and where they need to focus their efforts.



Get instant feedback on your homework

Get instant feedback after every question to reinforce the things you understand, and correct the things you don't understand.



Set yourself revision tests

Educake can create revision tests really quickly for you. Just choose the topics you want to revise and how many questions you want in the test. Educake will create a revision test for you instantly.



See how you are doing on every topic

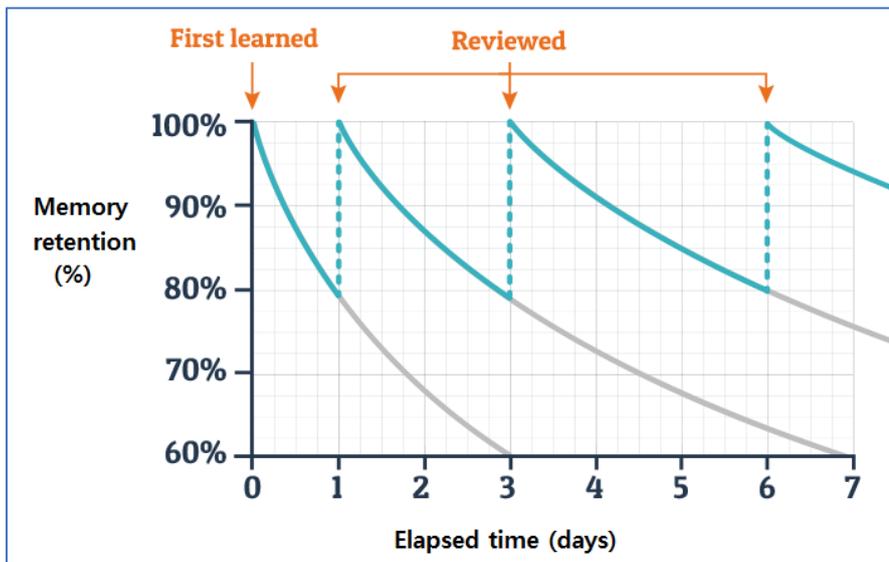
Educake shows you your strengths and weaknesses in an easy to read red-amber-green table, so you can focus on the topics that need more work. Click on any topic to take an automatically-created revision test.

Educake: www.educake.co.uk/forstudents

Educake is another great revision site.

The tests are made up of short questions, designed to improve your knowledge and understanding.

Ways to improve your memory!



1. Use spaced repetition:

Spaced repetition is the process of testing your knowledge multiple times, at intervals dependent on how well you know the concept. This works on the premise that the best time to review a concept is right before you forget it. This greatly improves your long-term memory.

On a daily basis this can be done by spending ten minutes of each revision hour spent revising previous content from the day before.

You can follow these steps to help you.

Step One: Within 20/24 hours of first learning the information and taking notes review your notes. When reviewing your notes, look away and try to remember what you read.

Step Two: Do the same exercise, but try remembering your notes while driving, walking, or activates outside of study. Then go back to your notes and check your understanding.

Step Three: For the next several days, every 24-36 hours, give yourself a mental test while you are doing something at that moment.

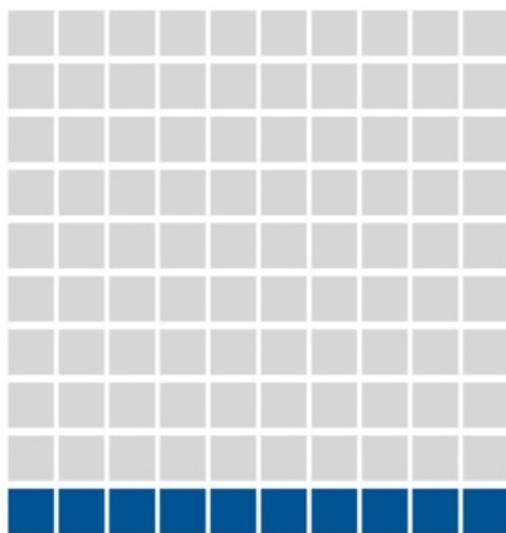
Step Four: Several days before the test, get your notes out and review them in detail.

2. Improve your encoding

It's possible to boost your memory by 55% by including images with text in your exam revision material. This phenomenon is called the **Pictorial Superiority Effect**.

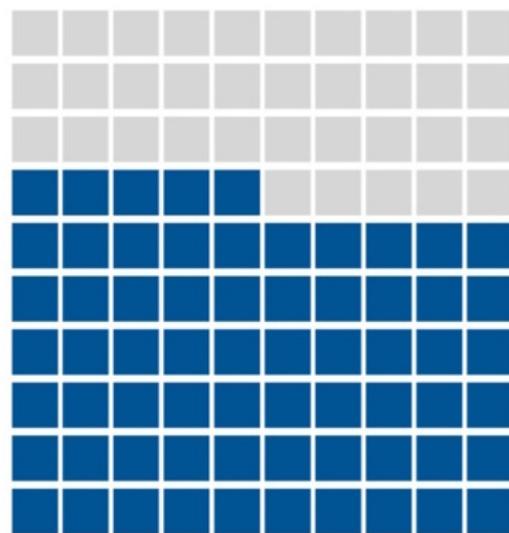
Basically, you will be able to recall more information if you add images to your flashcards, mind maps and posters. Don't worry if you're no artist (*me neither!*) – try stick figures, charts, maps, doodles or flowcharts.

Memory retention after 3 days



10%

Text or Audio Only



65%

Text + Picture

3. Use mnemonic devices

Mnemonic devices are memory tools to help you remember larger pieces of information from your exam revision. You probably use them in your day to day life without even knowing.

*The colours of the rainbow = **R**ichard **O**f **Y**ork **G**ave **B**attle **I**n **V**ain = red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet.*

If you're struggling to remember a list or group of information, try to create your own mnemonic to help you.

Wellbeing and Motivation

Some basics:

Ensure that your son/daughter

- Attends school regularly and punctually
- Completes all Homework
- Show an interest in what they are doing – you don't need to understand it!
- Support your child with revision
- Plan family time e.g. holidays and visits to relatives around their revision not the other way around.
- Encourage them to start revising now
- Help your child create a revision timetable from now
- Ask them to explain something they have just revised
- Make sure they get enough sleep! Without adequate sleep, our ability to think, to remember and to interact with others is impaired. We make poorly considered decisions, think slowly and forget things when we tired. Exam season is the worst time to suffer from problems like these.

Attendance Information

Attendance at the end of the year	Days missed from school	Weeks missed from school	Number of lessons missed
100%	0	0	None
99.5%	1	0	5
97.4%	5	1	25
95%	10	2	50
94%	13	2.5	62
92%	15	3	75
90%	19	4	95
87%	24	5	120
85%	28	6	140
80%	38	8	190
75%	47	9	235
70%	57	11	285

There are 38 weeks in a SCHOOL year

90% attendance = ½ a day missed every week!

90% attendance over 5 years of school = ½ a school year missed!

Research suggests that 17 missed school days a year = GCSE grade DROP in achievement.

The greater the attendance the greater the achievement

How you approach the next few months can have a real impact on your child's future. Studies show that high parental interest is linked with better exam results than for children whose parents show no interest.

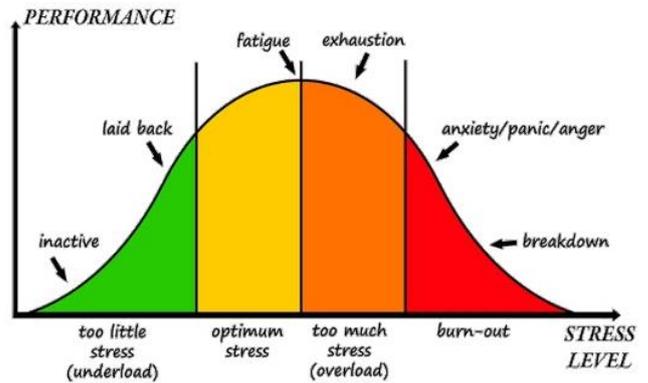
Look out for stress



Stress is the feeling of being under too much mental or emotional pressure. Pressure turns into stress when you feel unable to cope. People have different ways of reacting to stress, so a situation that feels stressful to one person may be motivating to someone else.

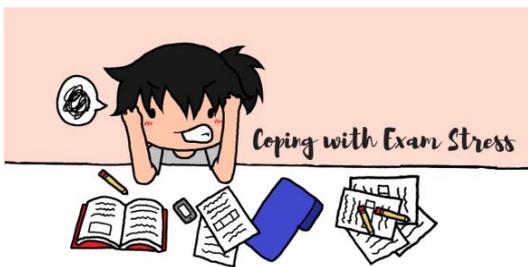
As a parent, one thing you need to look out for is evidence of stress. A small amount of stress and adrenaline is good, but *too much* stress can have a massive impact on revision and general mental health.

The Stress – Performance Curve



While you might not be able to get rid of exam stress, you can perhaps help your child to deal with *other* sources of stress, so that exams are less of a focus.

Look out for behaviour that is not normal for your child:



Body	Mind
Headaches	Excessive worry
Colds	Confusion
Muscle tension	Poor judgement
Twitches	Nightmares
Tiredness	Indecision
Skin condition	Negativity
Breathlessness	Rushed decisions

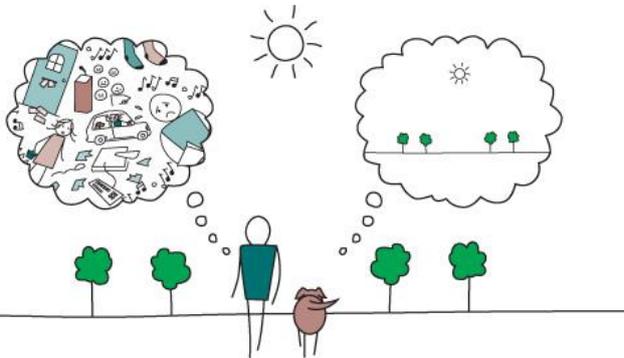


Emotion	Behaviour
Loss of confidence	Accident prone
Fussy behaviour	Loss of appetite
Irritability	Insomnia
Depression	Restlessness
Apathy	Unhealthy behaviours
Withdrawn	
Anxious	

Reducing exam stress

Tips for reducing stress:

- Sport is extremely helpful; a walk, a run, an organised class/team sport...
- Time with friends, doing something which *isn't* revision!
- A film night or family meal.
- Listening to music.
- Manage time effectively; use a revision plan and stick to it to avoid last minute panic.
- Keep a checklist of everything that needs to be revised. Being able to cross things off the list makes the revision seem like it's getting somewhere.
- Plenty of laughter
- Mindfulness – visualisation, breathing exercises



Mind Full, or Mindful?

- Make sure **your child** eats well. ...
- Help **your child** get enough sleep. ...
- Be flexible **during exams**. ...
- Help them to study. ...
- Talk about **exam nerves**. ...
- Encourage exercise **during exams**. ...
- Don't add to the pressure
- Plan some treats and end of exam activity



Online help and resources:

<https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/parents-guide-to-support-a-z/parents-guide-to-support-exam-time/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/coping-with-exam-stress/>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/your-stories/14-ways-to-beat-exam-stress/#.XI9tB9KgKmw>

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/school-college-and-work/school-college/exam-stress/>

Sleep

Although sleep has already been mentioned, a lot of youngsters report that they aren't sleeping well (especially at this time of year) and don't know what to do about it.

- Sleep is when the body recharges its' batteries.
- Without adequate sleep, our ability to think, to remember and to interact with others is impaired. We make poorly considered decisions, think slowly and forget things when we tired. Exam season is the **worst** time to suffer from problems like these.
- Biologically, teenagers feel tired later in the evenings than adults do, which means they play on phones, tablets, consoles, watch TV etc to in the time.
- Evidence shows that looking at a screen last thing at night actually keeps the brain awake (the light from screens stimulates melatonin, which is the chemical that keeps us awake). **Therefore access to electronic devices just before bed stops young people from sleeping!**

So how can you help your fabulous teenager to get a better night's sleep?

- Our bodies work well if they stick to routines. It is helpful to have the **same** sleep routine at weekends and during the week.
- It's better to have a nap for 20m during the day than to have a lie-in.
- Something calming (drawing, reading, having a bath, talking etc) before bed aids rest.
- Doing exercise during the day (but not *just* before bed) also aids a good night's sleep.
- Having a notebook by the bed means that if your

- child is worrying or thinking about something, they can write it down to get it off their mind.
- Avoid caffeine after about 8pm.
- Encourage a comfortable sleeping environment. Sometimes, a long bath and a clean duvet cover can be enough to encourage really deep sleep.
- Encourage a quiet sleeping environment; no music, other people in the house talking quietly, phones in the room switched off...
- Avoid eating too late as this can make it hard to get to sleep.
- Don't drink too much in the evening...



Food for thought....

Encourage your child to eat regular, healthy meals.

Brain Fuel (Advice for students)

- Bread, pasta, cereals and potatoes are filling and packed with starchy carbohydrates, which release energy slowly, meaning you can keep going for longer.
- Fruit and vegetables give you essential vitamins and minerals. Aim for at least five portions a day.
- Food like pasties, chips and crisps are high in fat. Unless you want to emerge from your room looking like Jabba the Hut, keep them for treats.
- Drink plenty of fluids. Dehydrated brains don't think clearly, and water is healthier than sweet, fizzy drinks.
- Meat, fish, pulses, milk and dairy foods are good sources of protein. Moderate amounts are essential for a healthy diet.
- Make sure you eat breakfast on the day of an exam.
- If you're not getting enough iron then you'll damage your ability to concentrate for long periods of time and your energy levels will begin to drop. If hour long sessions of revision are proving too much, try eating more red meat, eggs and leafy green vegetables like spinach.



Exercise

Although it is essential to use revision time effectively, a bit of the great outdoors can blow the cobwebs away and help your child relax. If they can't get out, at least encourage them to get up and out of their chair for a stretch and a wander whilst

How to create a Home Learning environment



What is a Home Learning Environment?

The home learning environment is the combination of everything you and your family do and the spaces your child has access to that affect your child's development and learning.

Five Steps to create a successful learning environment in the home.

Step One - Designate an area for learning. The first step to creating a home learning environment is to dedicate a specific space for learning. This area should have good lighting, low noise and a place to sit and lay out work.

Step Two - Minimise clutter. After designating a safe space for learning, focus on removing distractions. For example, working in the same room as a television or PlayStation can be incredibly hard for your child. Removing these distractions will help your child to focus.

Step Three – Establish a no-tech rule. Whilst studying, the only technology your child should be using is the electronic device they are using to access Google Classrooms (e.g. Chrome Book). This will help to create a distraction-free learning environment.

Step Four – Set Daily routines. To do this refer to page 3 of the handbook.

Step Five – Speak, Teach, Read.

- **Speaking** to your child about their work and allowing them to explain what they are learning to you, is a really important part of creating a supportive home learning environment. It helps them to assess their understanding of topics, whilst improving their motivation and focus.
- **Teaching** your child helps to consolidate their learning and enables you to model key self-regulatory skills. This can be done in the form of low stakes testing and feedback. Remember, you don't need to be an expert on the subject, use their notes to support you!
- **Reading** with your child helps to develop their literacy and is a great way to pass the time!

Key dates for the diary

Record and keep track of key log in details below.

Google Classroom:

Username.....

Password.....

Seneca Learning:

Username.....

Password.....

Tassomai:

Username.....

Password.....