

**Effective Revision Strategies and Habits: A brief guide for parents and guardians**

The exam period can be a stressful time for students, but careful planning and preparation can reduce this. There are several ways you can help alleviate this anxiety and promote a good work ethic and effective revision. I have listed below a few essentials that will help you support good habits:

Establish a quiet place for students to work.

Effective revision is more likely when students eat well, hydrate and have regular sleep patterns.

Revision should be completed without music, mobile phones and social media.

Regular breaks and exercise maintain a healthy and active mind.

Set short term goals by writing a revision timetable.

Regular revision is more effective than intense condensed cramming near the end.

Teachers employ a number of learning strategies that pupils can also use to aid retention and application of knowledge. I have listed a few below. If students are starting to lose sight of their goal, then changing their revision techniques can often keep them motivated.

**Retrieval Practice:** use class notes and textbooks to make a list of all the important information, then close the books and test yourself by creating flash cards, quizzes or answering exam questions. This is a strategy that improves learning and focuses on knowledge.

**Spaced Practice:** divide your subjects up into topic areas and plan manageable portions of revision time, approximately 30 mins. Repeatedly cover topics over a period of time. This helps students retain information over longer periods of time compared to one long massed learning session (Cramming).

**Concrete examples:** this involves finding and using examples that help deepen knowledge of abstract ideas. Our memories find it easier to remember the example rather than a theoretical concept.

**Interleaving:** is a process where students mix and combine multiple subjects and or topics. This aids long term retention of knowledge as it promotes regular recall of information and is helpful when answering synoptic questions.

**Dual coding:** this combines visual images with revision notes, for example in the form of diagrams, graphs, tables and timelines. Use of colour is often helpful.

**Exam vocabulary:** each subject has specific key terms, definitions and command words. The command words can vary in meaning between subjects so always ask yourself “Do you understand what the exam question is asking you?”