

St Peter's College

Study & Exam
Aid



Parental Guide



Sleep and Relaxation are Key

Sleep

According to the National Institute of Health (USA) sleep affects concentration, memory and the ability to learn. Therefore, it is important that you assist your child in getting approx. 8hrs sleep a night and if they are struggling to sleep on a regular basis you seek help.

Tips

- Discuss bed times with your child
- Remove technology 30min before bed
- Work/ Study area and sleep area should be kept separate where possible
- Wind down techniques before bed e.g. hot drink and a relaxing chat/ hot bath.
- 5-10min yoga or relaxing music
- Daily physical activity such as a walk or a sport will also help your child sleep

Stress

It is clinically proven that uncontrolled stress causes the memory to forget (J. Folk, M.Folk, 2018). This means that all the study you have done will be wasted as you cannot control your stress. Therefore, it is very important that we learn to control our stress and stay relaxed, especially in exam situations. Sometimes, we have to practice to become relaxed as we are so engrossed in work we don't realise how tense our body is and how stressed our minds are.

However, on the other hand, some stress is important, but only if you learn to control it. It can be used to motivate you to achieve your goals, if your goals are set accordingly. If your goals are unachievable or unrealistic, good stress can turn into bad stress. Good stress also shows that you care, have passion to succeed and can develop resilience. Practising exam situations, relaxation activities such as yoga/ meditation and planning effectively with the guidance of your teachers and a study plan will all help keep stress as good stress.



Useful apps/ activities for Sleep and relaxation

- Headspace App
- Stop, Breathe and Think app

These apps are very useful in times of stress for example, when a student gets overwhelmed when doing homework/ study or can also be very effective just as a wind down activity in the evening. Try 5-10 min every day.

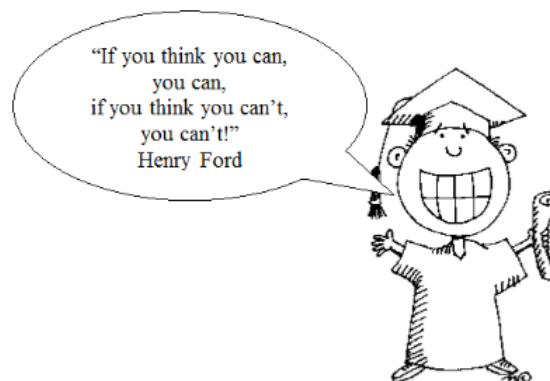
- Simply get a diary, write down how you feel or all the things that worry you so that it is out of your mind and onto a page.

Other useful websites:

- <http://www.mentalhealthireland.ie/>
- <http://ie.reachout.com/inform-yourself/money-work-and-study/exams/managing-exam-stress/>
- <http://www.spunout.ie/health/Education/Exams/Exam-stress>

Confidence

A confident student will be a relaxed student. Instil confidence in your child. Remind them that exams are supposed to be difficult and it is not about being the best but trying their best.





Revision Tips and Exam Preparation - Parent Guide

At a glance

How to support your child through the stress of revision and exams.

Assisting with revision



The secret to doing well in exams lies in planning. You can help your child to create a clear revision plan and method of studying that will make them feel in control of their work. (See template above)

Tips for Revision Planning:

- Work out a revision timetable for each subject
- Break revision time into small chunks - hour-long sessions with short breaks at the end of each session often work well.
- Make sure your child has all essential books and materials
- Condense notes onto postcards to act as revision prompts
- Buy new stationary, highlighters and pens to make revision more interesting
- Go through school notes with your child or listen while they revise a topic
- Time your child's attempts at practice papers

Providing all-round support

The best way to support your child during the stress of revision and exams is to make home life as calm and pleasant as possible. It helps if other members of the household are aware that your child may be under pressure and that allowances should be made for this.

If your child is given study leave in the run-up to exams, try to be at home as much as possible so that you can share a break and chat together.

Make sure there are plenty of healthy snacks in the fridge and try to provide good, nutritious food at regular intervals. Encourage your child to join family meals, even if



it's a busy revision day - it's important to have a change of scene and get away from the books and computer for a while. Also encourage your child to take regular exercise. A brisk walk around the block can help clear the mind before the next revision session.

Try not to make too many demands on your child during exam time. Arguments are counter-productive and will only add unnecessary stress and distract from revision.

It's important to get a good night's sleep before an exam so discourage your child from staying up late to cram. And make sure he or she eats a good breakfast on the morning of the exam.

Rewards

Encourage your child do well for his or her own sake rather than for money or to please you. Explain that exams aren't an end in themselves but a gateway to the next stage of life. Good results are themselves the best reward for hard work and will make your child proud of his or her achievements. However, make sure your child knows you're interested in their work and that you'll be proud if they do well. Although bribery isn't advisable.

(www.bbc.co.uk/schools, 2018)



Ten tips to help parents and children get through the exams

Written by Brian Mooney (Guidance Counsellor), published in the Irish Times.

1. Know your child's entire exam schedule.

Pin a copy of the examination timetable on the kitchen notice board. You should also note the date and time of each paper. Make sure you are at all times aware when your son or daughter has to be in the examination centre.

2. Ensure your child is present for each paper.

Yes, it sounds ridiculous, but with both parents working in many homes, it can happen that someone forgets to wake the student. Make sure they are up and dressed each morning before you leave the house.

3. Make a checklist of daily requirements, based on each day's papers.

Make a final check each morning before you leave home that your son or daughter is fully prepared for the day's exams. Writing instruments, along with the other requirements such as rulers, erasers, calculators etc should be checked, along with reading glasses etc.

4. Listen to the story of their day - and move on.

After each day's examinations, allow your child to recount to you their daily story. Do not be tempted to review in detail the errors or omissions they may have made in answering the paper in question. Such a process achieves absolutely nothing, other than to increase stress levels. Simply allow them the time and space to tell their story and move on.

5. Help them to focus on the next day's papers.

It can be helpful to review the next paper. Simple questions, such as "What is up next?", "Are there any compulsory sections?", "Are there any predictable questions?" and so on, can be useful in helping students devise their study schedule for the time available before the next exam.

6. Help them to maintain a balanced daily routine.

You should ensure your child maintains a proper balance between study and rest. After an exam, they need time to rest and recharge before they can do any beneficial study for the next paper. Remember that this is on average a two-week process and they need to be as sharp on the morning of their final paper as they are tomorrow. Late-night study sessions should be avoided.

7. A good night's sleep always improves examination performance.



All study should end at least one hour before bed to allow the student to unwind. Falling straight into bed from the study desk means the student's mind will be buzzing for hours as he/she attempts to fall asleep.

8. You are what you eat.

What you eat and drink affects your performance in any field of activity, especially one involving mental sharpness. As a parent, you should try to ensure that your child eats and drinks nutritious food during the coming weeks. Grazing on junk food is very tempting at times of increased stress. Avoid this.

9 Don't overhype the importance of any examination.

Make it clear to your kids that your love and regard for them is in no way dependent on how they perform in the Junior or Leaving Certificates. This affirmation is the best gift you can give them on the eve of their exams.

10. Make sure your child continues to mix with friends and family.

Don't isolate them in the study room upstairs. Contact with their peers is very important to maintaining their spirits during the coming weeks. You can also support them and lift their spirits when they are taking a break from their studies.



Reference List

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