



# Year 11 Parent/Carer Support



# Tips for Parents:



- Firstly, ensure that your child has the resources and environment to do everything they are being asked to by their teachers.
- A calm, supportive home goes a long way in helping children succeed with revision and exams. This is usually the hardest part. Once they begin, even in small amounts, it tends to be much easier.
- Monitor and motivate them. Keep an eye on their timetable, are they sticking to it?
- Try to motivate them on the (many) days that they just don't want to do it. Sometimes "over nagging" can be counterproductive. It's tricky to get the balance right between driving them on and knowing when to step back.
- Reward them. Think about different rewards you might use to encourage, motivate and focus their revision work. However, remember that sometimes intrinsic rewards like the satisfaction of learning a difficult piece of work can be the best reward itself.
- Stressors. Look out for any unusual signs in your child that might show that the stress and strain is getting too much and, if spotted, support them; offer them a break, a change of scenery or just a chat. If these concerns remain or intensify seek support.





## **Try to encourage and support good routines:**

- Ensure the school bag is packed each evening ready for the following day – no need to bring everything every day!
- Eating breakfast is vital!
- Your child/children leave the house on time in the mornings – punctuality is vital.
- Ensure there is a suitable place to do revision away from distractions.
- Be flexible – use the 80/20 rule. If your child is sticking to what they are supposed to be doing 80% of the time, they will be doing alright



## Improving your child's chances of making progress

There are a number of factors that cause students to lose marks in the exams. The factors below are generally reported by examiners. Here is a list of factors that your child needs to be aware of and concentrate on:

- Start in good time – leave it too late and you will start panicking.
- Plan for half hour or, at most, one hour slots. Nothing extra is likely to sink in if one subject is revised for much longer.
- When revising during the evenings plan 1 or 2 subjects only. Leave some time for relaxation.
- Allow some days off, but not in the few weeks just before the exams.
- Plan to revise specific topics or aspects of a subject – for example, not just science, but human systems, or waves, or chemical reactions or electricity.
- Read through a topic and then make brief notes on cards which can be used for further revision later.
- Use colours to highlight key words.



## **Key tasks before exams for parents**

Help prepare your child for the exam – talk with them about when it starts, how long it lasts for, what are the main topics that might come up. Don't overdo this though – they may have worked all day and have come down stairs to relax.





# Use the internet

Useful Websites and stuff...

More information about the sites listed is given in the relevant chapters. Information correct at time of going to press.

## General support for teenagers

- [www.projecteducation.co.uk/gcse](http://www.projecteducation.co.uk/gcse) Offers links to GCSE chat forums.
- [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)
- [www.childline.org.uk/info-advice](http://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice)
- [www.youthaccess.org.uk](http://www.youthaccess.org.uk)

## General parent support

- [www.projecteducation.co.uk](http://www.projecteducation.co.uk)
- [www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk)

## Exam boards

- [www.aqa.org.uk](http://www.aqa.org.uk) the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA)
- [www.qualifications.pearson.com](http://www.qualifications.pearson.com) Edexcel
- [www.ocr.org.uk](http://www.ocr.org.uk) Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR)
- [www.wjec.co.uk](http://www.wjec.co.uk) The Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC)

## Coursework and revision

(Please read notes on the use of essay banks in 'revision').

- [www.markedbyteachers.com](http://www.markedbyteachers.com)
- [www.sparknotes.com](http://www.sparknotes.com)
- [www.gcseguide.co.uk](http://www.gcseguide.co.uk)
- [www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize)
- [www.gcse.com](http://www.gcse.com)
- [www.S-cool.co.uk](http://www.S-cool.co.uk)
- [www.mymaths.co.uk](http://www.mymaths.co.uk)

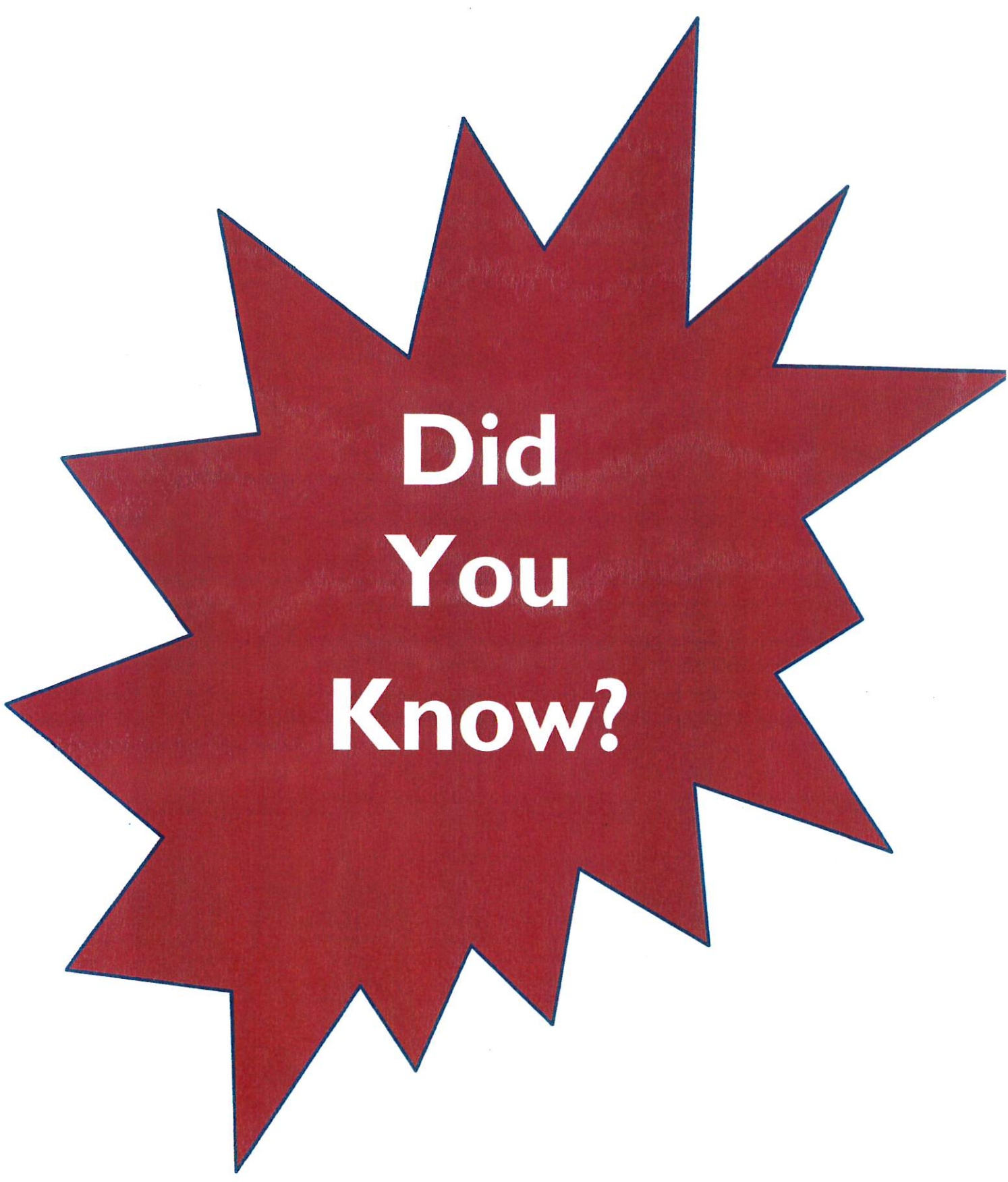
## Careers

- <https://direct.gov.uk>. The governments' official careers information site. Visit the Education and Learning pages
- Visit <http://nextstep.direct.gov.uk> and select Planning your career then Job profiles for free information on hundreds of different careers.

E-CLIPS lets you view and print out leaflets on lots of different topics, including Options after Year 9.

Kudos Online takes you through a series of questions to match you with career ideas. Your password to begin is the academy postcode = SL3 7EF.

- [www.Careersbox.co.uk](http://www.Careersbox.co.uk) - Careers films/videos – real people in real jobs
- [www.icould.com](http://www.icould.com) - Career advice, HE choices
- [www.apprenticeships.org.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk) - National Apprenticeship Service
- [www.futuremorph.org](http://www.futuremorph.org) - STEM careers
- [www.targetjobs.co.uk](http://www.targetjobs.co.uk) - Careers info – construction, accountancy, banking, law, engineering, environment, media etc.

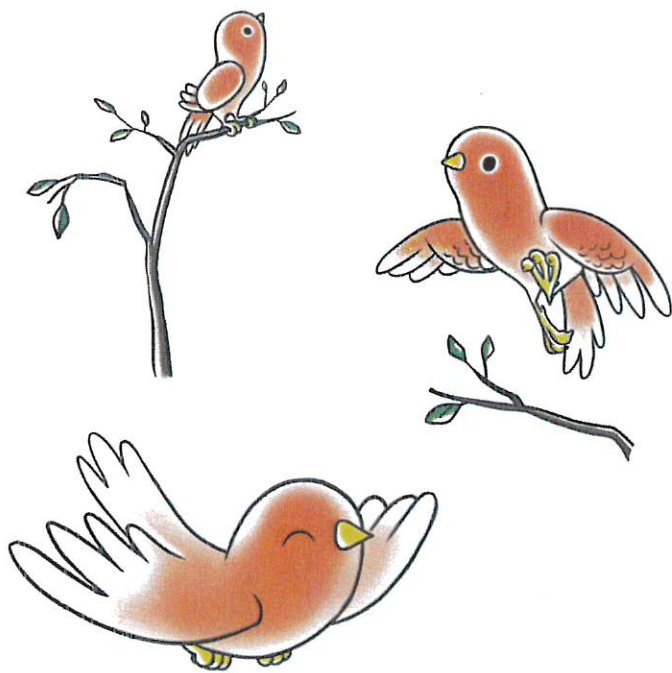
A large, red, multi-pointed starburst shape with a dark blue outline, centered on the page. The text "Did You Know?" is written in white, bold, sans-serif font inside the starburst.

**Did  
You  
Know?**



# Encouraging Independence

## Did you know?



Developing independence has many benefits: increased academic success, increased motivation and confidence and improved awareness of students' own strengths and weaknesses, as well as how to manage these.

Independent learning isn't about working alone: teachers and parents still need to support and enable the learning that is needed in this time so that it is structured, productive and effective. We can't expect children to just 'know' how to work independently as well as effectively, they will need some guidance and support.

Independent learning is most effective when students can be encouraged to self-regulate their own learning and behaviour.

Three  
Key  
Points

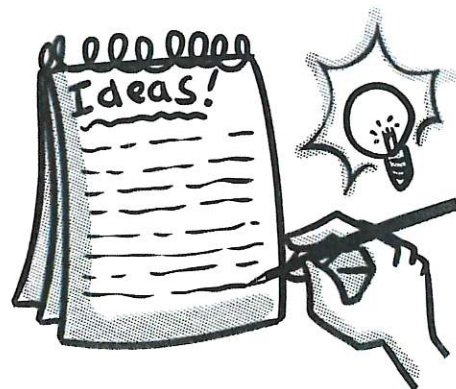
## What can you do?

Discuss your child's areas of strength and weakness, across the subject range they are studying, but also within each subject and topic. Independence isn't just about working, it's about reflecting on their progress and performance and considering where their time would be best spent.

Discuss the different ways your child could study, whether through booklets or textbooks, apps and other options. There are many ways to revise and most students have a preference, but often a combination is the most effective. The PiXL apps we have available, such as the Maths app, can dovetail well into a revision schedule, alongside practice questions and revision of topics that they are unsure of.

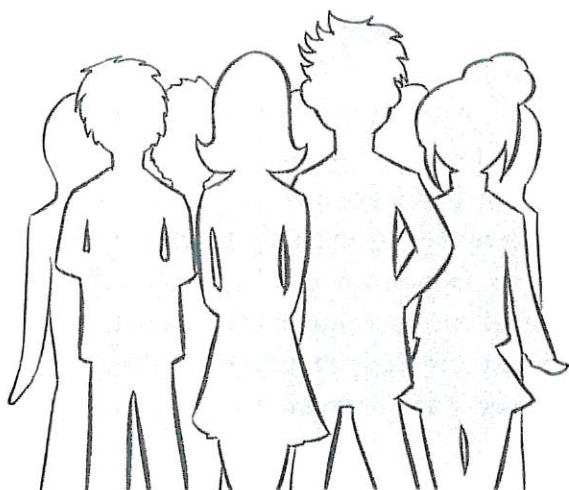
If your child doesn't have them already, ask their class

teachers for the PiXL Independence materials that we have created. These are available for most subjects and provide a variety of different tasks, along with a credit system, to help structure their revision whilst also developing their independence.





## Did you know?



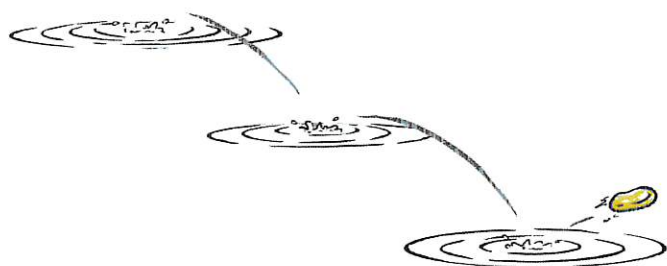
Aspirations reflect teenagers' hopes or desires to reach a particular level of education or reach a career. Studies show that students with either high aspirations or high expectations have higher school achievement than those with both low aspirations and low expectations.

Research suggests that there is a correlation between teenage goals, aspirations and psychological wellbeing. Raising aspirations is also believed to incentivise improved attainment.

Further studies have shown that parents believe their child will find it harder to achieve their life goals than they did because there is more competition for job roles than they faced when they started their careers. According to research from the Education Endowment Foundation, most young people actually have high aspirations.

## What can you do?

Three  
Key  
Points



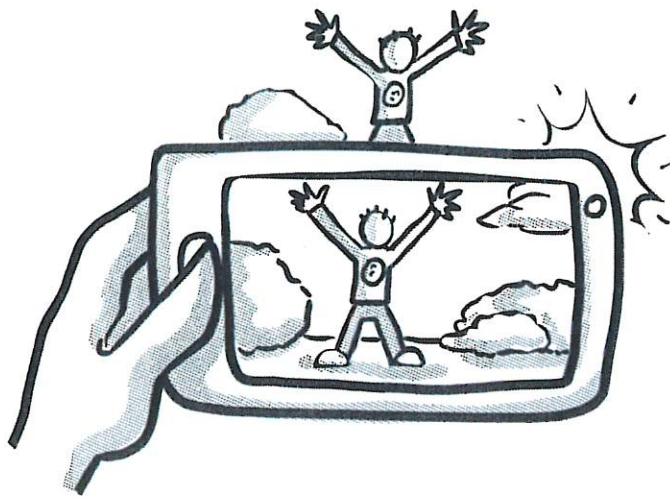
Talk to your child about their career, education or life aspirations. Be positive about what their hopes and dreams are and encourage them to start to be proactive in achieving them.

Try to raise your child's aspirations by highlighting new opportunities. Develop their self-esteem, motivation and expose them to role models to look up to. Inspire your child to be excited about their future and motivate them to pursue their dreams.

Young people who take part in family time or activities with their parents are more likely to continue these, achieve in education and seek out career opportunities. Arrange to do things with your child such as theatre trips, cultural activities, concerts, museums, hobbies or exercising.



## Did you know?



Evidence suggests that promoting resilience can help young people sustain good relationships, develop personal life skills, overcome challenges, cope in difficult situations and help them to achieve their potential. Human brains develop and change more during the teenage years than most other times in their life. This means that this is a time when there is huge potential for the development of new skills and capabilities.

Resilience is the ability to overcome adversity, 'bounce back' during difficult times and get back to feeling good. It is about having the capacity to adapt to difficult circumstances, and using tools and resources available to do so.

The Institute of Health Equity suggests that resilient individuals, families and communities are more able to deal with difficulties and adversities than those with less resilience. Building resilience is fundamental to teenagers becoming happy and functioning adults. Young people who are not resilient will be more likely to respond to stress by developing anxiety and depression.



## What can you do?

Help your child navigate their ups and downs by encouraging them to carry out resilient behaviours. You can be a building block in helping them build healthy habits, such as looking after their mental health, getting enough sleep, doing exercise, eating healthy food, hobbies, socialising or relaxing. Watch the video on YouTube to understand why resilience is important to young people's health: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Wocj5oTReU>

Staying connected with different people in our lives is the basis for building resilience. Help your child to understand who is in their support network when they

face difficult situations. This may be a grandparent, friend, teacher, sibling or sports coach etc. Encourage your child to make time to build relationships, see friends, have fun, take part in hobbies and connect with others regularly.

Encourage your child to build resilience by taking on new opportunities, challenges and achieving goals by stepping out of their comfort zone. This will help them to develop self-respect, be organised, promote positive thinking and to build confidence to deal with different situations.



### Did you know?



Self-care is anything you enjoy doing that helps make you happy and maintains your physical, mental or emotional health. Self-care helps parents and teens deal with life's everyday pressures in a more positive and rewarding way. Recent research has revealed that teaching teenagers how to balance their own needs now will help them in the future, while reducing some of the strain on their lives right now. Self-care can lead to healthier, happier, more adjusted young people.

Studies have demonstrated that when parents practice self-care, it's been shown that teens are encouraged to do the same, and take this positive habit into later life. So, your self-care helps teach your child how to look after themselves better.

Research shows that we need to build self-care habits from an early age so that when your child hits difficulties and roadblocks, they are able to navigate them skilfully and stay strong and steady. Self-care for teenagers is crucial with all the hormone changes, mood swings, struggles with self-image, self-esteem and building independence.



### What can you do?

Helping your child learn self-care can help them get through tough times such as exams, challenges or adversities. Suggest ideas to them about how to take care of their physical health, mental health and to be creative. Ideas include exercising, walking, having a manicure, going for a haircut, seeing friends, having a bath, reading books, listening to podcasts or drawing.

Self-care works best as a routine to help your child feel energised and deal with pressures well. Talk to your child about the importance of doing things they enjoy and that make them feel happy. Bounce ideas around with them, put them in the calendar and support them as they do them.

Encourage your child to make self-care a priority, remind them about it every so often and help them with what you can do together. Doing self-care activities together not only helps your child to cultivate good habits, it also helps your mind and body be at its best. Ideas don't need to be time consuming or elaborate, and sometimes they might be indulging! Get started by cooking healthy meals together, pursuing hobbies, taking pride in each other's appearance, having fun, getting outdoors, volunteering, or by watching a feel-good film.





# Handling the pressure of external exams

## Did you know?



Exam stress can be really challenging, not only for children but for those that live with them. Research shows that having someone to talk to about their work can help. Support from a parent, teacher or friend can help young people share their worries and keep things in perspective.

Survey research has identified that exams are a significant source of stress and worry for pupils in secondary school. In particular, failing important examinations, and the consequences of failing these examinations, are rated as more important than a range of other personal and social worries. (Optimus education)

The NHS highlight that Children and young people who experience stress may:

- worry a lot
- feel tense
- get lots of headaches and stomach pains
- not sleep well
- be irritable
- lose interest in food, or eat more than normal
- not enjoy activities they previously enjoyed
- seem negative and low in their mood
- seem hopeless about the future



## What can you do?

Watch out for signs of stress and encourage your child to talk to a member of school staff or someone who they feel is supportive. If you feel your child isn't coping, it may also be helpful for you to talk to their teachers at school.

Encourage and support your child to build and maintain healthy habits before and during the exam period, such as eating a healthy balanced diet, staying hydrated, getting enough sleep, doing exercise, having time to relax and to socialise with friends.

Remind your child that feeling nervous and anxious is

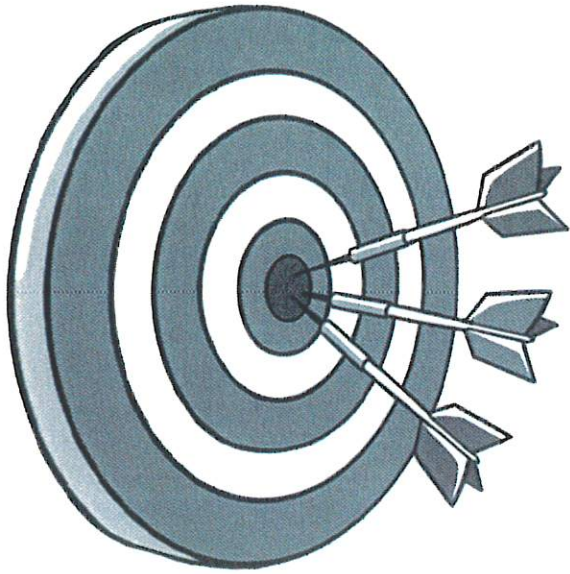
normal. Support them to be organised, have a routine and build a revision timetable. Try not to add to their pressure by being flexible with them. Talk to them about how they feel, remind them of their goals in life and motivate them to stay focused. Staying calm will help them remain calm - and exams don't last forever.





# Relaxation

## Did you know?

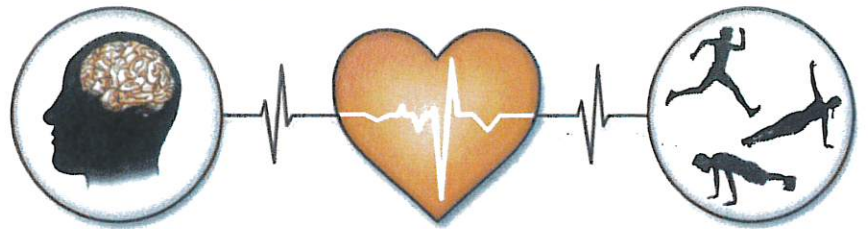


An important part of teenage life should be relaxation. It is an essential part of maintaining health and wellbeing and being able to calmly deal with stress and pressure which, as we know, can be quite intense during the school years and especially being an adolescent.

Research shows that young people face many different kinds of stress, worry, anxiety and can feel overwhelmed for various reasons. Relaxation has been defined as a 'state of being free from tension and anxiety'. We often forget to switch off as adults but it is important that we do that in order to help children learn important skills.

Many studies highlight the benefits of relaxation and here are a few:

- Slows the heart and breathing rate
- Improves concentration and mood
- Reduces anger and frustration
- Reduces the activity of stress hormones
- Improves digestion
- Increases blood flow to the muscles
- Relaxes the muscles
- Improves sleep quality



## What can you do?

One of the simplest relaxation techniques is to practice breathing. Teach your child to take deep slow breaths when they are feeling anxious. Just a few deep breaths can provide an instant calming effect that can help reduce stress. Look out for mindfulness apps or video resources on YouTube that offer example breathing exercises, such as Headspace or Calm.

Learning to relax is something that you can do together as a family. Try having a go at a Yoga or a relaxing activity together. Yoga will improve flexibility, posture and give you and your child a sense of inner calm. Encourage your child to go to a local class or

follow a simple Yoga session on YouTube. Other things could be having quiet time to read, going for a walk, listening to music or watching a feel-good film.

Another technique for your child to try is 'imagery', having a vision about a happy place so their brains can take a break. Ask them to write down a description of their happy place which includes how it looks, feels, smells and sounds. When they are stressed out, ask them to close their eyes and to think about it. Just like new skills, relaxation techniques require practice so keep prompting them to find out what works for them.



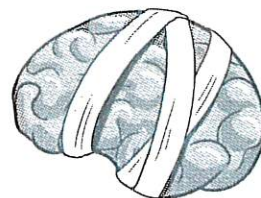
## Did you know?



Research states that mental health issues affect about 1 in 10 children. The emotional wellbeing of children is just as important as their physical health. Good mental health allows young people to develop resilience, cope with the ups and downs in life and grow into healthy adults.

Surveys suggest that most young people are mentally healthy but more children are having problems due to life changes, traumatic events, feeling vulnerable or not coping with difficult situations. The Guardian has recently published that tens of thousands of young people in Britain are struggling with their mental health and are seeking help online for problems.

Research indicates that common mental health problems for young people include depression, self-harm, eating disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety and panic attacks. Poor mental health in childhood affects educational attainment, increases the likelihood of smoking, alcohol and drug use, and has consequences for poorer physical health in later life.



## What can you do?

Take time to do some research about mental health issues and symptoms with young people. Point your child towards websites or helplines that can give them information as well. Here are some useful websites to get you started:

[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk) [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

Seek further advice from a professional if you are worried or concerned about your child.

Talk to your child about any worries they have, be supportive and show empathy and understanding. Try to avoid persistent questioning but encourage them to open up to you and reassure them that you are there to help them. Try to make your child feel loved, trusted and safe.

Don't blame yourself for any problems your child is having as this will not help the situation. Be honest and explain that you are worried and help them access the right kind of help. Encourage your child to take up healthy habits to help them to maintain a positive state of mental health. Examples are:

- Healthy eating
- Good sleep routine
- Seeing friends and connecting with others
- Taking time out to relax
- Exercising
- Doing hobbies
- Spend time outdoors