

Welcomes

Welcome and thank you for coming this evening. For those of you who do not know us, I am Gayle Raybould, Head of Halton House and responsible for Key Stage 3, standing beside me is Dave Rowland, Head of Ascott who is responsible for KS4.

This evening is about providing you with helpful information and tips on how to revise, or support you child through their revision period. We will also be giving you tips on how to deal with the stress of exams. Whether you are doing the exam yourself, or watching a loved one preparing for exams, it can be an upsetting and turbulent time in the household, so we hope this evening you take away with you some useful coping strategies for the next couple of months.

As you can see from the slide behind me, Dave and I will start proceedings with some general tips on revision. These are relevant whether you are in Year 9 preparing for your end of key stage exams, or Year 11 starting revision for the GCSE's.

You will also hear from our Head Boy, Max, and Head Girl, Jenny, as to their experiences of exams and revision.

Finally, we have guest speakers. Geoff Strack, a consultant from SAM Learning, will be talking about how it can be used as a revision tool, and Deborah Sheppard (Healthy Schools Advisor) and Louise Garard (Brief Solutions Therapist – Youth Connexions) will be talking about the physiology of stress and strategies to deal with it.

Slides 2 & 3

What do you see? Everyone sees something slightly different in this picture. This is simply to do with our interpretation and this is caused by the way our brain works. I am very much a left brain person (though that's not that brilliant either). It would be great if we all had equal amounts of left and right sidedness but that's not the case so we all find some things much easier to do than others.

Slide 4

You thought you had come to sit and listen – not a chance!! Have a go at this – I was amazed how I initially couldn't control this (our brains take over).

Slide 5 & 6

I will give you a few seconds to read this mental task. PAUSE

One of the problems with many students is that they start reading a question and then anticipate what the question is asking rather than reading the whole question and identifying exactly what it is that is required. Does anyone have the answer?

Slide 7

Revision is boring, but unfortunately, unless you have a photographic memory it is a necessary evil to get us through exams. Everyone has had to cram for exams, going over what you already know, whilst also trying to remember things you might have forgotten. The nature of testing in this country means that on the whole we have examinations, and that you need to do revision.

Revision works. If you watch the same film often or listen to the same song frequently it is like revision. And it is this repetition that means you can recite every word of something. This is the point of revision - reviewing what we have already heard and seen before, so that it is imprinted in our memories.

Slide 8

However, revision needs to be planned and timed to work effectively. You need to be clear about when you will start and end your revision for the day, as if you do not, the efficiency with which you learn and revise falls away. And all that time you will have spent will be wasted.

For parents, it's about helping your child figure out which way they like to learn and facilitating it. Don't put them in a room with a TV if you know they will turn it on the moment you leave. Give them a place they can go to without their brothers and sisters distracting them, and make sure they have all the equipment they need before they start. Teenagers are great at delaying getting down to work by not having the right books, not having a pen or pencil or paper.

Slide 9

As you can see, planning your revision time and knowing when you are going to finish means the efficiency with which you learn dips, but then improves again towards the end. This means that planning a revision timetable, as boring as it may sound, will help improve the quality of your revision.

Slide 10

The graphs behind show us that you can make the revision that you do even more efficient by planning and scheduling breaks and rest stops into your revision programme. This will help improve the quality of the revision being done compared to no rest breaks being planned. If you know that you can concentrate for 15 minutes but then will need to stop and make yourself a drink or have a stretch, plan this in. Put a stop clock next to you and when that buzzer goes off, stop.

If you know you can keep going for half an hour, plan this in. But you also need to be realistic about the amount of time you want to spend doing revision. Don't plan to do 3 hours if you know that you won't be able to manage it. All you will be doing is setting yourself up to fail. Think about what you can manage and plan your revision timetable around it. It might be that you plan to do 2 hours and then watch a programme for half an hour, or go out and play a game of football, but remember to come back to it!

Slide 11

In terms of the way you revise, it will depend on the way you prefer to learn. Some students will revise best with a friend testing each other. For others this will be a distraction and an excuse not to revise. Others will prefer to listen to music or have background noise. But most will prefer to revise in quiet conditions. Some will take copious amounts of notes, others will prefer to make notes on post its. These all work, but will depend on the personality of the child.

So parents, again, help your child by facilitating this and encouraging them to find a way in which they prefer learning if they haven't already figured it out. Make sure they have post its, postcards, their books and a computer if necessary.

Slide 12

One popular way of revising which I know I use to plan, is through mind-mapping. The use of colours and pictures can make the revision more interesting, but also more memorable through adding symbols to represent areas you need to remember.

One good way of using mind mapping is by getting everything you know down on paper about a topic before looking at your book. You then check through your book to see what you might have forgotten and add it in to the mind map.

INTRODUCE MAX (Head Boy) and Jenny (Head Girl)

Slide 13

5 general tips to get students through exams –

the right place to revise (bedroom, library, at school for an hour BUT more importantly don't be DISTRACTED

understand key words – describe, compare, explain, identify

Slide 14

Plan your answers – read through the exam paper first before starting to write

Eat and sleep – need the energy so you need to rest and refuel

Ask for HELP – brothers/sisters/cousins etc, parents, friends, teachers

INTRODUCE GEOFF STRACK – SAM learning

INTRODUCE DEBORAH SHEPHERD and LOUISE GARARD

OPPORTUNITY TO LEAVE FOR KS3 PEOPLE

Slide 15

Colour NOT the word – another example how we have to try and get both sides of our brain to work together. We learn best when our left and right brain work together.

Imagine that you have to spell the word TRIGONOMETRY – how do you learn it? Do you draw a mental picture OR scribble it down to see if it looks right? Perhaps you say it slowly, breaking the word into manageable bits.

Slide 16

Brain Teasers are a great way to warm the brain up. As with any part of the body or any machine if you try to go straight into full action it takes a while for it to run well and efficiently. Doing little teasers like this at the start of a session help us get our brain into gear – get it working in an alert, sharp way.

Slide 17

This suggests some ways that you might try to revise depending on which is your strongest intelligence. That doesn't mean that you can't try other ways of revising. You can improve your intelligences and they will change as you go through life

Slide 18

Creating a new memory is a bit like creating a new path through a forest covered in thick undergrowth: it takes time and effort. Recalling a fact requires the brain to reconnect those brain cells it linked together to hold the memory. If it is a long time since a topic was visited the brain is going to have to work especially hard to reconnect the cells – the pathway has become overgrown with lack of use.

The good news is that the more often the brain is asked to repeat a pattern of thought, the easier it is to make the reconnection – the pathway between cells becomes a beaten track.

Summary – the first time we experience a new fact the brain creates a pathway of cells. To recall a fact the brain reconnects the same cells. ACTION – continually review and revisit information to ensure the pathways of knowledge are kept in good repair and the brain can recall essential info easily. USE it or LOSE it!!!

Slide 19

See revision as a cycle. Choose a subject, warm the brain up, select a topic or an aspect of a subject, explore and work on the topic, check what you have learnt. This can be applied to whatever you are revising and how long the session is.

Slide 20

Study Support Programme

TRADITION – leave school one day and on their own the next

BRIDGE THE GAP – trying to give a balance

PERSONAL NEEDS/PLAN – the students have a choice of the sessions they attend though some are compulsory

INDEPENDENT LEARNING – it allows them to gradually find their feet on independent learning/on their own

FIT AROUND EXAMS – some exams will already be happening before the full study leave begins

2 WEEKS (17TH – 28TH MAY)

Slide 21

TAUGHT REVISION SESSIONS – with particular focus on certain grades or certain topics or exam techniques

SUPERVISED STUDY – when not in a session they can opt for a session which is supervised by a member of staff (but not necessarily one of their specialist teachers)

HOME STUDY – some Periods will allow the students to make the decision to work at home (normally a Period 1 or 5)

EXAMS – these obviously are compulsory and take precedent over anything else

Slide 22

Further info to include:

REGISTRATION / ATTENDANCE – students will still register and attendance to what they sign up for is compulsory NOT optional

BEHAVIOUR – as normal if not better

SCHOOL RULES – will remain in place as normal apart from students will be allowed I-Pods

FEEDBACK / EVALUATION – I will also seek feedback from students on how it was for them and how it maybe improved.

Slide 23

EXAMS –

Be punctual and attend unless you really are poorly. If unwell please phone school as soon as possible (you may need a medical certificate)

Equipment – clear pencil case, lots of pens, pencils etc (black biro), calculators

Mobiles – NOT allowed, leave at home if possible OR hand in at reception with a name tag

In between exams – learning centre, unsupervised study OR they can go home

Exam t/t – multiple copies visible around home and checked thoroughly

Revision t/t – if it is not drawn up already it needs to be done as soon as possible. Make it realistic and stick to it

Keep a balance in your life – NOT all work.

Slide 24

Tip 1

Time management - get together a revision timetable today (if you haven't already!!!)

TIP 2

Don't do it all at once – short bursts of revision and changes of scenery

Slide 25

TIP 3

Don't just revise the subjects you like - revise the subjects you hate and do this in the morning

Tip 4

Answer the exam question – NOT your own

Slide 26

TIP 5

Reading is useless!

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Be active when revising!!

Use a variety of methods!!

Tip 6

Believe in yourself and be positive