



**Year 11 Parents**

**Exam Preparation Guide**

**Summer 2025**

# Contents

## **Section 1: Encouraging and developing positive study habits**

- Inner Drive: A Parent's Guide to Surviving the Exam Season p3
- PiXL - How to encourage productive learning p4
- PiXL - Encouraging independence p5
- PiXL - How to support the revisiting of learning p6
- PiXL - 'Don't break the chain' p7

## **Section 2: Exams and Aspirations**

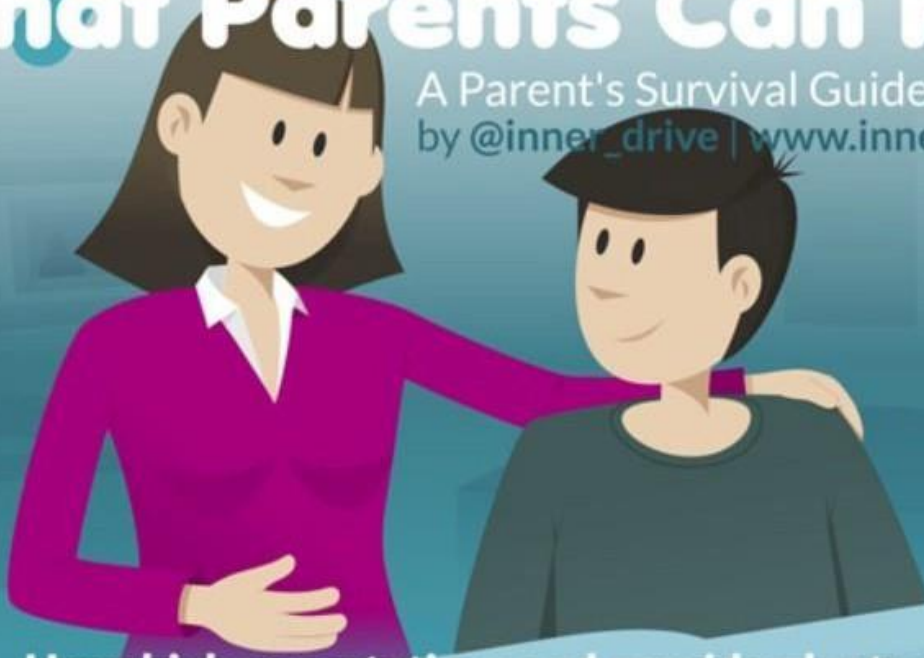
- Inner Drive: 7 Ways to Stop PANIC Taking Over in an Exam p8
- Inner Drive: 9 Ways to Beat Revision Stress p9
- PiXL - Handling exam pressure p10
- PiXL - Aspirations and Ambitions p11

## **Section 3: Healthy habits - Lifestyle advice and guidance**

- PiXL - Helping your child get into healthy habits p12
- PiXL - Hobbies and opportunities p13
- PiXL - Self-care for teenagers p14
- PiXL - Relaxation p15
- PiXL - Sleep p16
- Inner Drive: 9 Common Sleep Mistakes p17
- PiXL - Mental health p18
- PiXL - Positive relationships and social connections p19
- PiXL - Social media p20
- PiXL - Screen time p21
- PiXL - How to help develop reading and vocabulary skills p22

# 7 Ways That Parents Can HELP

A Parent's Survival Guide to Revision  
by @inner\_drive | [www.innerdrive.co.uk](http://www.innerdrive.co.uk)



- 1 Have high expectations and provide plenty of support**  
Both are needed to help your child improve, perform and develop resilience
- 2 Help them work smarter**  
Not all revision techniques are equal. Spacing out their revision and quizzes are better than cramming and highlighters
- 3 Cope well with their setbacks**  
There will be highs and lows. How you react to their lows will impact how many highs they have
- 4 Minimise distractions**  
Provide a revision area with minimum distractions (this include mobile phones!)
- 5 Rise and dine**  
Make sure they eat breakfast. It plays a big role in concentration and memory
- 6 Regular bedtimes and lots of sleep**  
If they sleep right, they will think right the next day
- 7 Avoid cabin fever**  
Encourage them to get fresh air each and every day

# How to encourage productive learning

Information for parents and carers

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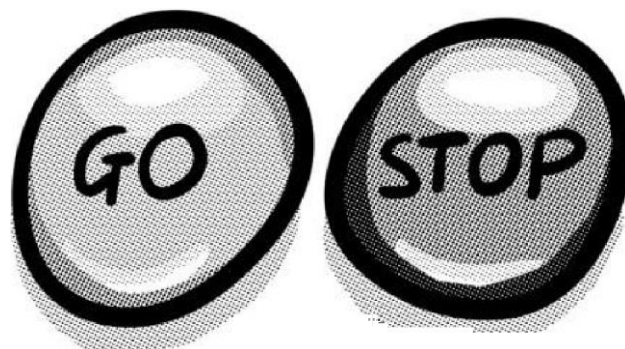
## Did you know?



Experts in nutrition stress the importance of healthy diets for ensuring the most effective working of our brains. For example, although caffeine and sugar can provide bursts of energy, consuming these can lead to significant dips in focus and energy. We also know that easy swaps can lead to more balanced nutrition and energy levels, like using wholegrains, nuts and berries.

Having a tidy space can reduce stress and improve productivity. Another way to maximise opportunities for work and reduce distractions is to ensure the space is organised with everything needed for studying: laptop, books, pens and any other equipment. If you want to go a step further, plants are shown to not only create a calm space but also aid concentration.

Many people find approaches like the Pomodoro technique help to increase their levels of productivity as it allows for focused 'work' time for 25 minutes, and then a 5-minute reward break. It is often surprising how much we can actually achieve in short bursts of time when we are fully focused, with no distractions, and know that there is a clear end when we'll get to do something we want to.



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## What can you do?

Help your child to create a productive learning environment, a quiet space where they can work at a clear surface with as few distractions as possible. Encourage this to be a social media-free space.

Sit down with your child and offer to help them create a timetable of study. Work with them to map out the free time they could use to study and the free time that should be 'work-free' so they can do things they enjoy. Plan out the subjects and units they know they need to work on and schedule these into their 'work' slots. If your child is receptive to doing this together, it can help them to see that they aren't expected to use

all of their 'free' time to study, and that taking breaks and investing time in their hobbies and friends is important and valuable for them and their wellbeing. If possible, when your child is studying, bring them some snacks and a drink to help sustain them.

Encourage your child to prepare - either by themselves or with you - recipes from our Power to Perform recipe cards to ensure that they are eating brain-boosting foods. These recipes have been designed by an expert in the field to ensure that your child has brain-boosting foods and drink at their fingertips.

# Encouraging Independence

Information for parents and carers

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## 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.

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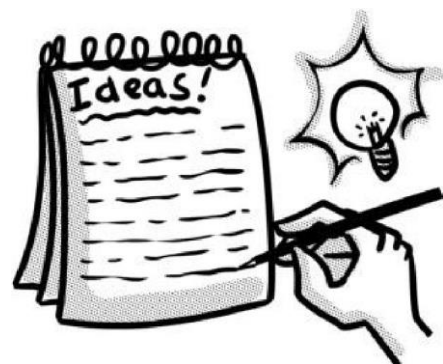
## What can you do?

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.

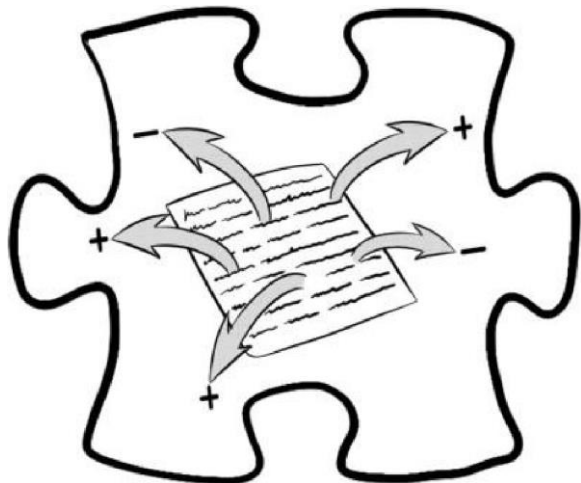


# How to support revisiting of learning

Information for parents and carers

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## Did you know?



Remembering information is the first step for students in mastering higher level skills. For students to be able to explain, analyse, evaluate and create, they need to have a firm knowledge of the information and terms involved first.

Ebbinghaus' forgetting curve aims to show us how information can be lost from our memories over time when we don't strive to retain it. This forgetting curve suggests that we will halve our memory of new information in just days, unless we revisit learning to gradually move it into our long-term memory.

The more frequently that information is revisited and used, the more likely it is to move into longer term memories. Research shows that revisiting learning frequently is more effective than mass-revision. Unfortunately, many students report that they don't feel like it's working and they prefer larger and rarer chunks. Knowing this is useful for us, and the young people we care about, so we can talk about it and address this issue, even showing them typical forgetting curves and sharing examples of these.



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## What can you do?

As early as possible, encourage your child to make notes of the key information for topics they are studying. They may highlight these in a book/on a sheet, write them down onto flash cards, create a mind map or record them in any other way that they wish. Colour-coding these can be a helpful tool in aiding revisiting as students can identify in green what they are confident with, orange what they are unsure they would remember long term, and code in red that information they didn't know until they wrote it down or don't fully understand and may need to explore further.

Encourage revisiting of topics frequently, using a home-learning schedule. Discuss with your child the need to revisit learning as they progress through units,

move onto next ones and come to the end of a term or year. Revision shouldn't be revising all the knowledge from the entire year; we should aim to revisit learning frequently to embed it into our long-term memories and then revise the higher skills using this knowledge as we go further into the course.

Encourage your child to find ways to address 'red' areas and weaknesses. This doesn't necessarily need to be seeking a teacher's help, it might be reading about it in a textbook, Online or practising a particular skill. They may wish to use some of the resources PiXL have created as part of our Independence package to help them to consider areas of weakness and different ways they can address this.

# Don't Break the Chain

Information for parents and carers

## Did you know?

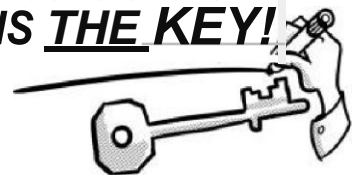
'Don't Break the Chain' is a method of success originally created by Jerry Seinfeld. Jerry placed an X on a calendar for every day he completed writing new material. After a few days a chain of X's formed and the goal is to NOT break the chain by carrying out work for every day of the year.

Research shows that habits can transform any part of our lives. Getting the right habits in place prior to exams can make a huge difference to pupils' success. The 'Don't Break the Chain' strategy is a constant reminder which can help pupils stay disciplined, be determined and keep motivated.

Pupils can set their own goals and targets, which may be to complete revision or homework every other day, exercise four times per week or drink two litres of water a day. The chain could be colour-coded for each activity. The goal they set themselves and the key is to mark it off and not to break the chain they have set themselves to achieve.



**CONSISTENCY  
IS THE KEY!**



## What can you do?

- Print off and have a calendar displayed for your child to use. Work with your child to set realistic goals and milestones. Offer them some mini-rewards when they achieve them to help keep them focused and motivated to carry on and succeed.
- Encourage and work with your child to get into positive daily routines to keep the chain connected for a few weeks at least. Consistency is the key so encourage your child to keep it simple and manageable. Eventually, routines will become a habit and your child could add in new goals.
- Try the 'Don't Break the Chain' habit yourself so you are involved in the challenge as well and can support your child to stay on track. Encourage your child to stay on track using positive reinforcement. Make sure your child reflects on their progress every week or so to see where they are and if they need to change some of the habits they have decided to work on.

# 7 Ways to **STOP** Panic Taking Over During an Exam

by @inner\_drive | [www.innerdrive.co.uk](http://www.innerdrive.co.uk)



- 1. TAKE SOME DEEP BREATHS**  
This will help clear your head and give you time to think.
- 2. RE-READ THE QUESTION**  
This will help ensure you don't misread the question and avoid making sloppy mistakes.
- 3. THINK BACK TO YOUR REVISION**  
Have you answered similar questions previously during your revision?
- 4. WHAT WOULD YOUR TEACHER SAY**  
What advice would your teacher give you to help you right now?
- 5. SOMETHING IS BETTER THAN NOTHING**  
Better to guess the answer than leave it blank. If you don't write anything down you are guaranteed to get zero marks.
- 6. STICK TO YOUR EXAM STRATEGY**  
If you have a bad first question, stick to your pre-planned strategy and don't let the bad start affect your performance on the next question.
- 7. DON'T PUT TOO MUCH PRESSURE ON YOURSELF**  
Work your hardest and do your best. Some stress is good but becoming too stressed doesn't help you think clearly under pressure.

# 9 Ways to Beat Revision Stress

by @inner\_drive | [www.innerdrive.co.uk](http://www.innerdrive.co.uk)



**Do the actual work – revise!**



**When really stressed, talk to someone about it**



**Get some fresh air each day**



**Stick to regular meal times**



**Do something to switch off an hour before bed**



**Don't dwell on worst case scenarios**



**A good sleep the night before is better than last minute cramming**



**Once you've done the exam, move on to the next one**



**Don't aim for perfection – it's a myth and doesn't exist**

# Handling the pressure of external exams

Information for parents and carers

## 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
- become 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.

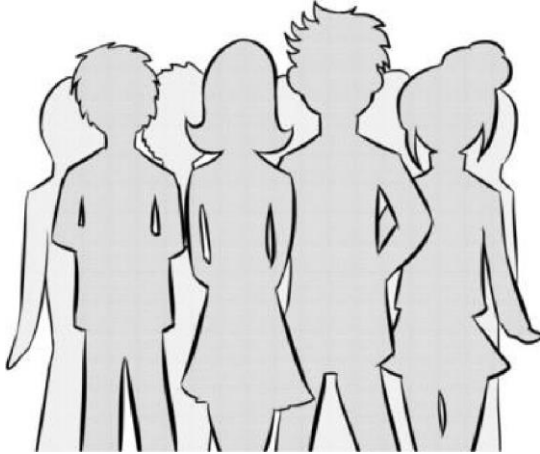


# Aspirations

Information for parents and carers

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## Did you know?



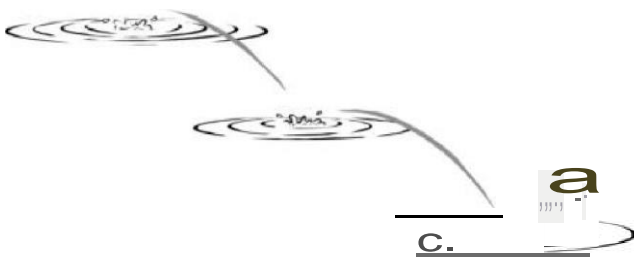
Aspirations reflect teenagers' hopes or desires to reach a particular level of education or reach a career. Studies shows that students with either high aspirations or high expectations have higher school achievement than those with both low aspirations and **low** expectations.

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

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## What can you do?



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.

# Helping your child get into good habits

Information for parents and carers

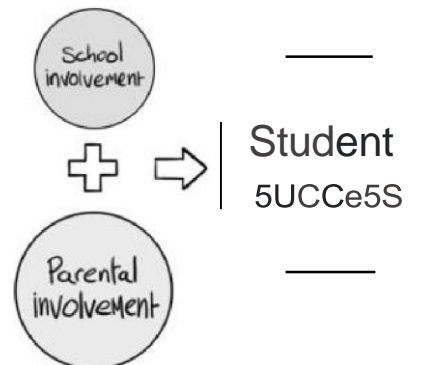
## Did you know?



Healthy habits are essential to living a long and happy life, and they are important to instill in children from a young age. If you help them form these habits now, you will be giving them the tools to navigate any obstacles they may face as they grow into adulthood.

Research highlights that the late teenage years have been identified as the peak age for exposure to health risks with lifelong implications. The report, by the Association for Young People's Health (AYPH), revealed teenagers eat eight times the recommended sugar allowance and almost half have tooth decay. This worrying research also found out that most smokers start by the age of 25.

Research reveals that there is a strong link between healthy habits and pupil achievement. Poor health habits add up to poor grades, and research suggests that healthy habits and good health-related decisions can lead to improved academic performance. For instance, research has shown that students who eat breakfast exhibit improved concentration when compared to their peers who skip it.



## What can you do?

Cultivate healthy habits by being a role model to your child. Try to exhibit good habits, offer health advice and build fun healthy activities into your family life. Examples include being active as a family, having evening and sleep routines, providing a water bottle to encourage hydration, or making family meals together.

Good nutrition can help improve concentration, so pay attention to the food you buy for your family. Provide a healthy balanced diet of meals which include fresh vegetables, fruit, proteins, good fats and whole grains. Encourage your child to snack on low sugar foods and drinks; which you could make together.

Help and encourage your child to get enough sleep, live a physically active life and feel good about themselves. Work with them to map out their week to include healthy habits such as exercise, relaxation and seeing friends. Set some healthy lifestyle goals together, and keep each other motivated to stay on track.



# Hobbies & Opportunities

Information for parents and carers

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## Did you know?



A hobby can make a teenager feel happier in a variety of ways. Hobbies allow them to learn new skills, meet new people and discover new passions. It can enrich your child's life and increase physical and social interactions. Hobbies can also prevent teenagers from feeling bored or keep them entertained.

Research indicates that most children try five hobbies before they find what they like. Studies also show that children who engage with hobbies are more sociable, don't get bored as easily and it supports them to have good mental health.

Teenagers need free time to explore their own interests, unwind, build relationships and have fun. Research shows that young people thrive on connections they develop, which demonstrates how valuable hobbies are.

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## What can you do?

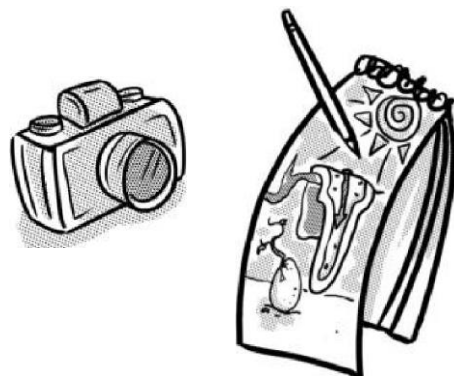
There are many different hobbies for your child to choose from, including sports, music, arts, building, computers, reading, photography, pet care and more. Encourage your child to take part in individual or group hobbies to enrich their lives and explore their interests.

Talk to your child about what they are interested in and what hobbies they would like to try. Carry out some research in your local area and community to see what they could get involved in. You could also take part in a new hobby together or they could get some friends involved too.

Explain to your child the importance of hobbies to help them be proactive and to take action. Reinforce the



importance of hobbies, such as to build confidence, learn new skills, help to choose a career, meet new people, disconnect from technology and discover new interests.



# Self-care for teenagers

Information for parents and carers

## 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 skillfully 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.

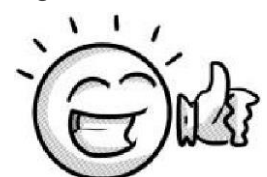


## What can you do?

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.



# Relaxation

Information for parents and carers

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## Did you know?



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

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.



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## 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.

# Sleep

Information for parents and carers

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## Did you know?



The Sleep Council highlights how quality sleep is essential for growth and development and that your child needs between 8-10 hours' sleep every night. Teen's body clocks naturally shift to make them feel tired later in the evening, but early school starts do not enable them to sleep in the mornings. Chronic sleep deprivation can have a huge effect on a teenager's life and mental wellbeing.

Further research shows that there is a link between getting enough sleep, sleep awareness and student performance. Numerous studies have shown that not getting enough sleep can negatively affect school performance and impair cognitive function.

Teens need more sleep than adults. Research shows that the brain's ability to process information declines with lack of sleep. Our emotional responses, empathy towards others and tendency to do silly things all goes up with lack of sleep. Long term sleep deprivation can suppress the immune system, lead to forms of cancer, heart disease and metabolic abnormalities.



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## What can you do?

Help your child establish a good sleep routine. Encourage them to limit screen time before bed and to read a book or magazine instead. Get them to keep a sleep diary over a two-week period to see how much sleep they are getting and how they can improve it. Have a conversation with your child about their sleep.

Eating late at night is not good for digestion or aiding a better night's sleep. Make sure your child avoids sugary and heavy foods late at night and doesn't drink caffeine or energy drinks from lunchtime onwards. Healthy habits such as warm milk or chamomile tea, daily exercise, relaxing in the evening and having a calming bedroom environment, can all help your child get a better night's sleep.

Try to get your child to go to bed at the same time each night and wake up at the same time each morning - even on a weekend. A consistent sleep-wake cycle is really important for them to function well. Know the signs of sleep deprivation and work with your child to find a routine that works for them.



# 9 Common Sleep Mistakes

by @inner\_drive | www.innerdrive.co.uk



1

Watching TV  
right up until  
bedtime



2

Long naps  
in the day



3

Killing time  
online



4

Different bedtimes  
each night



5

Drinking tea, coffee,  
cola or energy  
drinks late at night



6

Waiting to fall  
asleep before  
going to bed



7

Being on your  
phone in bed



8

Staying in bed  
when unable  
to sleep



9

Overthinking  
tomorrow

# Mental health

Information for parents and carers

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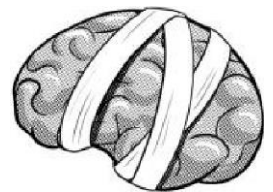
## Did you know?



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.



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## 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

# Positive relationships and social connections

Information for parents and carers

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## Did you know?



During adolescence, young people learn how to form safe and healthy relationships with friends, parents, teachers, and romantic partners. Research has identified that teenage relationship abuse is associated with a range of adverse outcomes for young people, including mental health, depression and suicide.

Research shows that positive social connections with people at all stages in life helps ensure healthy development, physically, socially, and emotionally. As Children transition to adolescence and start to spend less time with parents and siblings, friendships with peers become -an increasingly important source of these social connections. Strong relationships and positive friendships can help encourage healthy habits.

Studies have shown that developing and maintaining a positive and strong parent-adolescent relationship has real consequences. Positive parent-child relationships are associated with higher levels of adolescent self-esteem, happiness, life satisfaction, and lower levels of emotional and physical distress.

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## What can you do?



Help provide opportunities for your child to develop social skills through building relationships with others in different settings. This could be by encouraging them to see their friends, join a youth group and take part in hobbies with others or local sports. Social connections and experiences can help your child discover who they are, improve their happiness and develop coping skills.

Talk to your child about different kinds of relationships, resolving conflicts; maintaining friendships and what healthy, positive relationships consist of such as:

- Mutual respect
- Being yourself
- Trusting each other

- Having different opinions and knowing it's okay
- Not feeling pressured into doing things they don't want to do

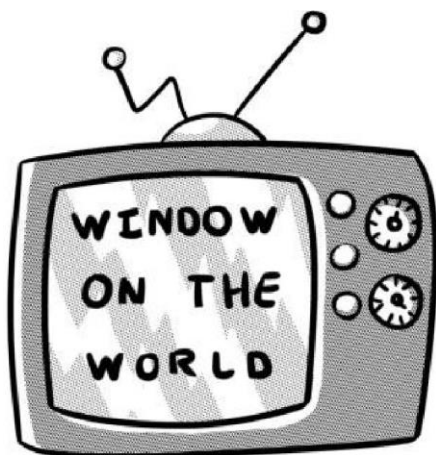
Have a look at the Relate website for all kinds of relationship advice to help you support your child in the best possible way: [www.relate.org.uk](http://www.relate.org.uk)

Your relationship with your child is equally, if not more, important than any other as it will last well into adulthood. Some degree of conflict is normal but your child will still rely on you for emotional support, to set boundaries and to be a role model. Make sure you spend quality time with your child, have fun and laugh with them, talk to them, encourage them and be there if they need help.

# Social Media: what do we know and what should we do?

Information for parents and carers

## Did you know?



Research shows that high use of social media is linked to poor mental health. One recent study shows that young adults who used social media heavily were three times more likely to be depressed than occasional users. Another study discovered that young people who exceeded two hours of social media use per day were more likely to claim that their mental health was 'fair' or 'poor' than occasional users.

Sleep is crucial for productive engagement and wellbeing. Research has shown that social media and screen time in general is linked to lower quality of sleep.

Each social media site is able to decide how they protect their users; there is no agreed set of child safety rules to protect young people from the risks. Each site will have its own age ratings, for example WhatsApp has recently set its minimum age to 16 years old. Even YouTube has a minimum age requirement, which is 18, but from 13 years old a child can sign up as long as they have a guardian's permission.

## What can you do?



Talk to your child about the positives and negatives of social media. Most young people are very aware of these and know that there are changes they could make to use the internet in general in a healthier way. Being

upfront about our own habits (even any unhealthy ones!) and setting goals together can sometimes help to avoid making it a source of conflict. One key aspect of this is discussing how social media can affect our

reputation through the digital footprint we create for anyone to access.

Encourage screen-free time before bed. If possible, having a family-wide screen-free curfew could help model good use of screens and place value on everyone caring for their wellbeing through winding down activities and increased quality of sleep.

Help your child to spend more time on activities they enjoy and which make them feel good. Perhaps encourage them to re-join a sports team they used to like, take up a hobby that they've expressed an interest in, or spend time as a family doing things together.

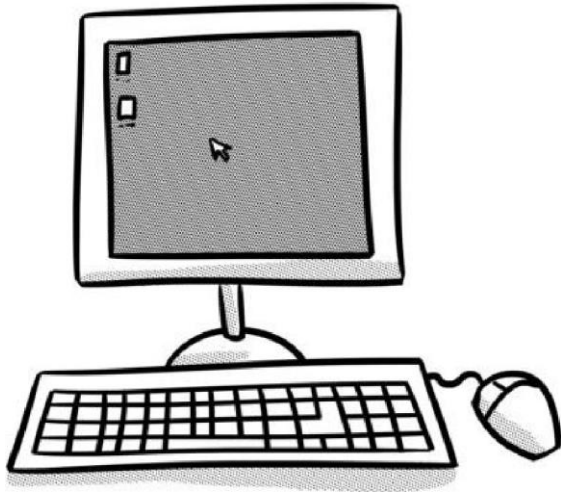
This could include, for example, family movie time using films your child has recommended, or trips out together etc.

# Screen Time

Information for parents and carers

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## Did you know?



Battles over screen time and devices have become a depressing part of family life. Recent research has revealed that it's not so much the length, but the nature of the screen time that matters. What is important is that whatever young people are watching, playing and reading is high-quality, age-appropriate and safe.

The University of Oxford examined 120,000 UK 15-year-olds in 2017 and found that among those teenagers who were the lightest tech-users, it was found that increasing the time spent using technology was linked to improved wellbeing - possibly because it was important for keeping up friendships. In contrast, among the heaviest users of technology, any increase in time was linked to lower levels of wellbeing.

Further research has shown that more than two hours of smartphone use on a weekday, and more than four hours on a weekend day, was linked to lower wellbeing. Several other studies suggest that higher levels of screen use in children and adolescents is associated with reduced physical activity, increased risk of depression, and lower wellbeing.



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## What can you do?

The British Psychological Society recommends that parents and carers use technology alongside children and engage them in discussions about media use. Help your child get into a screen-free bedtime routine. Screen time in the evening is especially bad for sleep patterns.

Set limits like no screens during meal times or no screens after a certain time. Suggest having one day a week with no screen time like Screen-Free Sundays. If they have a smartphone, encourage them to turn off as many notifications as possible and to turn on flight mode when they're with friends and family.

Encourage your child to do new physical activities

instead of screen-based inactivity. This could be new hobbies, going for a walk, playing sport, being creative or joining a youth group. Role model good behaviour by being mindful of your own screen time.



# How to help develop reading and vocabulary

Information for parents and carers

## Did you know?

Research shows that reading for pleasure has the most impact on the frequency at which young people read, their educational achievement and their personal development.



Renaissance Learning's report for 2018 showed that in primary school, children are generally reading books that are of a level exceeding their age and ability. Unfortunately, this changes at secondary school; children in Year 7 generally read books which are levelled at a year below their age and this gap either plateaus or continues to widen throughout the remainder of their time at secondary school.

Research has shown that as they grow older, children find reading less enjoyable and they also read less frequently. We also know from research that, in general, boys enjoy reading less than girls.

## What can you do?

### 3 things to do if your child is at Key Stage 3:

Encourage your child to find texts they enjoy; choice and interest in reading is key. Spend some time at the library or a local book store and ask someone who works there to give suggestions based on your child's interests, films or books they've enjoyed or new and popular books other children have enjoyed. Some research has shown that children who have books of their own enjoy reading more, but it is often worth ensuring that they're confident they'll enjoy the authors/texts they are choosing before investing!

Encourage your child to read for 15-30 minutes every day. This doesn't have to be novels - it could be short stories or even non-fiction. If your child is willing, sit with them and read together so that you can discuss and tease out some of the issues that crop up.

If your child has shown an interest in a recent issue in the news, or a particular topic at school, look into non-fiction articles or books related to it and help them see how they can follow their own interests and develop their knowledge of different areas they find engaging.

### 3 things to do if your child is at Key Stage 4:

By this age, young people can sometimes be harder to inspire in areas like reading. It can sometimes be worth

discussing what your child dislikes, or finds difficult, about reading; be open-minded about their views and try to discuss ways around these together. It's fine to have dislikes, but what might they enjoy reading? Where could they make a start?

Encourage your child to find texts they enjoy; choice and interest in reading is key. This doesn't have to be fiction, it could be non-fiction extracts or whole texts too. You may find text ideas together, from your child's own selection or seek advice from their teachers at school. Due to the nature of GCSE English Language, you may find that your child's school library or English department have banks of fiction and non-fiction extracts for them to explore. This can help them, and you, to get a feel for what may interest them before widening your search to whole texts.

Consider, with your child, what subjects or topics they are particularly enjoying and seek out fiction and/or non-fiction linked to those. For example, some young people who like science enjoy biographies of well-known scientists from across the ages, those interested in history have a whole wealth of fiction and non-fiction available to them in their chosen areas of interest and those who enjoy maths may find books about topics like Alan Turing's Enigma machine of interest.