



**HERMITAGE
ACADEMY**

*Turn over for plenty of top tips
to help you help your child*

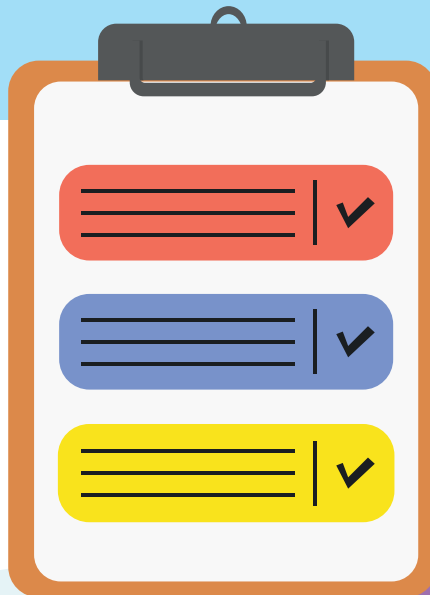


HELP YOUR CHILD BEAT EXAM STRESS

Exam season can be a really daunting time for some young people, whereas others seem to just take it in their stride. As a parent/carer, you may also be feeling under pressure as you want them to be able to do their best and put the effort in.



You may find that helping them get organised for revision is an uphill struggle, but it is important to note that each young person has their own way of revising that often works for them...



Watch for signs of stress:

Children and young people who experience stress may:

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

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. Encourage your child to talk to a member of school staff 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 in school.

TOP TIP...

Give them a break and understand lost tempers and moodiness.

Make sure your child eats well

A balanced diet is vital for your child's health, and can help them to feel well during exam periods. Some parents find that too many high-fat, high-sugar and high-caffeine foods and drinks (such as cola, sweets, chocolate, burgers and chips) make their children hyperactive, irritable and moody.

Where possible involve your child in shopping for food and encourage them to choose some healthy snacks.

TOP TIP...

Keep bottles of water and bowls of snacks in the fridge for breaks between revising.

TOP TIP...

Arrange for them to have a healthy and nutritious breakfast to help them focus and concentrate.



Help your child get enough sleep

Good sleep will improve thinking and concentration. Most teenagers need between 8 and 10 hours' sleep a night. Allow half an hour or so for your child to wind down between studying, watching TV or using a computer and going to bed to help them get a good night's sleep. Cramming all night before an exam is usually a bad idea. Sleep will benefit your child far more than a few hours of panicky last-minute study.



Encourage them to get all their pens, pencils and equipment ready the evening before. Try to get them to go to bed early so they are able to have a restful sleep.





Encourage exercise during exams

Exercise can help boost energy levels, clear the mind and relieve stress. It doesn't matter what it is - walking, cycling, swimming, football and dancing are all effective. Activities that involve other people can be particularly helpful.



Build downtime into the revision timetable for meeting up with friends, hobbies, exercise and fresh air.

Don't add to the pressure

Support group Childline says lots of the children who contact them feel that most pressure at exam time comes from their family. Try to listen to your child, give support and avoid criticism. Before they go in for a test or exam, be reassuring and positive. Let them know that failing isn't the end of the world.



After each exam, encourage your child to talk it through. Talk about the parts that went well rather than focusing on the questions they had difficulties with. Then move on and focus on the next test, rather than dwelling on things that can't be changed.



Be flexible during exams

Be flexible around exam time. When your child is revising all day, don't worry about household jobs that are left undone or untidy bedrooms. Staying calm yourself can help. Remember, exams don't last forever.

TOP TIP...

Establish a revision routine by arranging the family schedules and priorities that work for them.

TOP TIP...

Be lenient about chores and untidiness as much as you are able to.

Help them to study

Ask your child how you can best support them with their revision. Make sure they have a comfortable place to work and study which is quiet. If you do not have a suitable spot, make it easy for them to study elsewhere, like the library or at someone's home. It may be better to go out and let them have the house to themselves at crucial times for an hour or so. Help them to come up with practical ideas that will help them revise, such as drawing up a revision schedule or getting hold of past papers for practice. To help with motivation, encourage your child to think about their goals in life and see how their revision and exams are related to them.

TOP TIP...

Have a discussion about locking mobile phones and tablets away when revising.

Talk about exam nerves

Remind your child that feeling anxious is normal. Nervousness is a natural reaction to exams. The key is to put these nerves to positive use.

If anxiety seems to be getting in the way rather than helping, encourage your child to practise the sort of activities they will be doing on the day of the exam. This will help it feel less scary on the day.

Help your child to face their fears and see these activities through rather than escape or avoid them.

Encourage them to think through what they do know and the time they have already put into studying to help them feel more confident.



Be calm, positive and reassuring and put the whole thing into perspective. Try to avoid nagging as it can help them lose focus!



Make time for 'treats'

Think through with your child some rewards for doing revision and getting through each exam. Rewards don't need to be big or expensive. They can include simple things like making their favourite meal or watching TV.

When the exams are over, help your child celebrate by organising an end-of-exams treat.



Don't go in for bribes; encourage your child to work for their own satisfaction

When should we get help?

Some young people feel much better once exams are over, but that's not the case for all young people.

If your child's anxiety or low mood is severe, persists and interferes with their everyday life, it's a good idea to get some help. A visit to your GP is a good place to start.

Useful websites for further information:

Childline

www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/school-college-and-work/school-college/exam-stress/

NHS.UK

www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/coping-with-exam-stress/

Family Lives

www.familylives.org.uk/advice/teenagers/school-learning/exam-stress/



