

Bishop Vesey's Grammar School



Year 7: A Parents' Guide to Supporting your Child

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As a parent or carer sometimes it is hard to know what to do to help your child succeed at school and prepare for exams. This booklet is designed to help you find some solutions to those problems.

We all want the best for students at BVGS and we want them all to reach their full academic potential. That's why learning and exam skills are important.

If we prepare our students for the world of 6th form, Higher Education and work by focusing on skills, then we are allowing them every chance of success, no matter what the future has in store.

The impact that you have on your child's success is enormous. The time they spend outside of school is huge compared to the time spent in school. Ensuring that we have open communication channels and a balance between work and play will make sure that they achieve their maximum potential and are heading for a happy and successful future.

General Advice for study in Year 7

Environment...

Your son's working environment outside school can be one of the biggest factors affecting success. Everybody is different but as a general rule your son needs to be away from distractions like TV, mobile phones and social networking sites. He may also need some space to store textbooks and exercise books so that he can be organized for the day ahead. He must be using his planner at all times to ensure that he has the correct equipment and homework with him

You could consider:

- ❖ Having a family 'study time' where everyone is involved- reading the paper, doing homework, revising or testing each other on what might be on an upcoming test or assessment
- ❖ Changing meal times to fit around study times.
- ❖ Finding opportunities for using time more effectively. 10 minutes here and there really adds up. Test questions in the car, discussing the news over dinner or simply talking about what they learnt at school today.
- ❖ During exam time having mind-maps and revision aids around the house can make use of every second.

Incentives...

We all know that results should be their own reward, but sometimes a little something extra can go a long way. Discuss with your son what would motivate them to set more ambitious targets. Remember to be challenging but realistic. Why not try concert tickets, a day out, a new phone, a day out with friends or even some time off from household chores!

Love and understanding...

Research shows the most successful parents provide their children with challenge and unconditional love. As they progress through their life at BVGS there are going to be times when they feel anxious and insecure. Providing your child with reassurance that, whatever happens, you will always be there to support them will help them to approach their studies with confidence.

Communication...

The easiest and most efficient form of communication between home and school is your son's student planner. In here he will have a record of all of his homework and private study. If a subject teacher or their form tutor needs to contact you, this is the ideal place to use. Your son's planner will also give you early warning signs if your son is having difficulty meeting deadlines and managing his behaviour. Your son's planner needs to be signed weekly. This is checked by your son's form tutor on a Thursday. If you need to contact your son's Head of Year this can now be done directly through the school website.

Concerns...

If you or your son has any concerns about study and academic progress it is important that the problem is tackled.

- ❖ If your son is struggling in a particular subject; speaking to the subject teacher for guidance and support can be an excellent way of accessing advice.
- ❖ If your son requires emotional support then try speaking to the Key Stage 3 Learning Mentor who can offer advice on study skills and a range of issues that face teenagers in modern society.
- ❖ Encouraging your son to discuss any difficulties and problems he may have can help you to reach a solution together.

Inspiration...

In order to meet commitments, overcome obstacles and complete challenges, we need someone or something to inspire us.

Examples might be:

- ❖ A friend or family member who is currently in 6th Form or Higher Education.
- ❖ A professional with a career they aspire to.
- ❖ You could discuss how your own or other family member's exam results helped you to achieve success.
- ❖ Role models from the media.

How to revise in Year 7

All students have been taught how to revise in tutor time, extra-curricular sessions and in lessons. So when they claim there is: 'Nothing to revise', or 'I don't know how to revise', this is simply not the case! Encouraging them to revise effectively at home, for tests, assessments and exams can be tricky but effective revision is vital to achieve the very best levels.

Test them...

Get them to create a set of flash cards for you to use. Make it fun and challenging- how many can they get right in a row? This also allows you to help them work through the ones they don't get right or struggle with. It also helps you to check that they are working at a higher enough level to achieve the top levels.

Revision cards...

Ask them to condense their notes into smaller and smaller forms. Can they manage to reduce one topic to a single side of A3? Or a few key points on a post card? This helps them to identify and remedy their weaknesses as you discard the things you already are confident on.

Mind Maps...

Starting in the centre of a large piece of paper, students map out all of their ideas and show how their notes link together. Using colours, shapes and symbols are also excellent tools to categorise and organise information.

Keywords...

Why not try getting your son to reduce topic areas to sets of keywords. You can then ask him to explain all of his knowledge relating to that one key word.

YouTube...

Although it can be a source of mindless time-wasting, if your child loves YouTube, it can become a valuable revision tool. There are lots of films, TV clips and videos that directly relate to lots of topics. Just make sure that your child, as with any source of information they come across, is evaluating the information they find. It is also advisable to install software that allows parental controls

Even better, why not get them to create their own revision videos?

Mnemonics...

Despite the off-putting name, these are really very simple. Just take the first letter of the things you need to remember and create a new word or phrase.

Never Eat Shredded Wheat

**My Very Easy Method Just Speeds Up
Naming Planets**

MP3...

If your child is always listening to music, what else could they be listening to instead? Revision notes? Podcasts? Stories? Poems? A recording of a lesson?

There are all kinds of resources available on-line. This also takes the stigma out of revision because no one knows what you're listening to!

Memory trails...

Locating information along a route makes it easy to remember. It doesn't have to be a long journey. Let them put facts on post-its and stick them up around the house- on a mirror, going up the stairs, around their bedroom walls. It is surprising how much easier it becomes to remember when you retrace the route later in your memory

Revision Websites



<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/ks3bitesize/> Written and audio resources for every subject



www.mymaths.co.uk contains revision pages, games, puzzles and offline activities



www.activehistory.co.uk is an excellent website full of resources and games designed to aid revision in History.



www.s-cool.co.uk contains revision materials as well as hints and tips for passing exams



www.revisioncentre.co.uk provides revision advice for both students and parents



www.sparknotes.com provides notes on some of the poetry and the Shakespeare plays studied at GCSE

Warning...

- Revision websites can be repetitive
- In the exam it is pen and paper
- Watch they are not just playing on games