

WELLBEING TIPS DURING EXAMS

We recognise the pressure that our Year 11 students are under and the many anxieties that they may be facing during exam-time. In order to support student wellbeing, we have put together the following tips which we hope will be useful:

Eat healthily and drink regularly

Our brains use up lots of energy when we are concentrating and studying. Eating a healthy diet and eating and drinking regularly helps to stop our body producing stress chemicals and keeps our brain functioning efficiently. Remember to avoid caffeine 4-6 hours before bed – sources of caffeine include: tea, coffee, chocolate, energy drinks, some fizzy drinks, sweets and ice cream and even some medications.

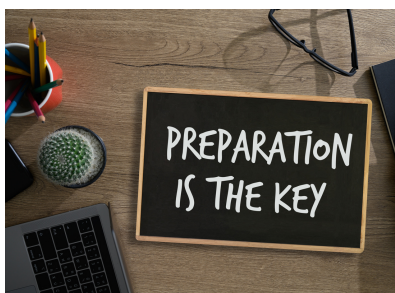


Exercise to reduce stress and help concentration

Stress can be kept at bay by physical movement, which also produces endorphins to help us feel good. Even just a quick walk to raise the heart rate can be beneficial, particularly during study breaks where exercise can aid problem solving, and improve information processing and concentration. If you are able to exercise outside this helps regulate our internal body clock aiding sleep. Many people find breathing exercises and mindfulness meditation or yoga useful too.

Aim for 9 hours sleep a night

Many people struggle with sleep during periods of stress. Try to avoid technology for one hour before going to sleep and remove the distraction of phones – as the blue light in screens can negatively affect sleep patterns. A mug of hot milk can also be worth a try to help us feel relaxed and more sleepy. The NHS recommends 9 hours of sleep per night for 15/16 year olds – tiredness can increase the stress hormones in our body and less sleep can affect the Rapid Eye Movement (REM) sleep which is important for learning and memory.



Preparation is key

Find a study space that works, set realistic goals by topic and make use of the resources provided to help you create a revision plan tailored to you. The 'Exam Preparation and Revision' section under the 'Student Area' of our website has a copy of the exam timetable and lots of information to help support you in your revision: <https://bishopr.co.uk/student-area/exam-prep-revision>.



Think positively and keep things simple

When we start to feel overwhelmed it is easy to lose focus on the task at hand and struggle. Where possible, try to focus on what you can control rather than what you can't, for example, you have no control over exam questions but you can control how much effort you put in. Rating how you feel on a scale of 1-10 (where 10=really stressed and 1=not stressed) can help to identify how you are feeling. Breaking tasks down into smaller, more management chunks can help you to move one point at a time down on the scale.

Don't forget the fun things too!

Whilst studying you might have less time for yourself and to do all your usual activities. Don't forget this is only temporary and you don't need to stop all the fun completely! Keep a bit time aside to do some of the things that you enjoy too, reward yourself and make time to relax with friends and family which is important for your wellbeing.



Seek support if needed

Don't forget to look after yourself and notice how you are thinking and feeling. If things change seek help or talk to someone. It takes courage to acknowledge you need help and to tell someone - whether it be your friends, family or support online or in person. If you have concerns about yourself or a friend please tell your tutor, Head of Year or Learning Support and we will do our best to provide the necessary support.

Further help

More resources and articles which you might find useful:

- **Pearson Exam Stress and Wellbeing -**
<https://www.pearson.com/uk/educators/schools/issues/working-together-to-build-healthy-and-happy-schools/exam-stress-and-wellbeing.html>
- **University of Oxford Exam wellbeing and Preparation -**
<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/wellbeing>
- **University of York Exam Wellbeing Tips -** <https://blogs.york.ac.uk/student-voices/2021/12/20/10-tips-to-look-after-your-wellbeing-during-exam-season/>
- **University of Bath Wellbeing During Exams -** <https://blogs.bath.ac.uk/students/2022/02/02/a-guide-to-wellbeing-during-exams/>

Mindfulness Sleep Apps:

Conscious
Smiling Mind
Headspace
Calm.com
Breathr
Pzizz Sleep
Nature Sounds
Proactive Sleep Alarm
Clock
BetterSleep

Useful Websites:

www.anxietyuk.org.uk
www.mind.org.uk
www.nopanic.org.uk
www.samaritans.org.uk
www.youngminds.org.uk
www.rethink.org
www.themix.org.uk
www.sane.org.uk
www.elefriends.org.uk
www.papyrus-uk.org

Helplines:

Samaritans – 116 123 (24 hrs)
Mind Infoline – 0300 123 3393 (9am-6pm, Mon-Fri)
Saneline – 0300 304 7000 (4pm-10pm every day)
The Mix (age 11-25yrs) – 0808 808 4994 (4pm-11pm)
Childline – 0800 1111 (24 hrs)
Papyrus – 0800 068 414 (9am-Midnight every day)



5 Tips for Promoting a Sense of Calm during Revision

An organised and mindful approach to revision will help ease the stress that comes with the exam period. Our tips below are designed to help your students create a calm revision space around them...

1

Include extra-curricular events in revision timetables

Encourage students to include extra-curricular activities, family commitments and other important tasks in their revision timetables. This will help them to manage their time and juggle any other commitments. Breaking up long revision periods with other events will also help make the exam period seem less daunting overall.

2

Introduce 'social media detoxes'

With technology and social media such a major part of our lives, and often a source of stress or anxiety for a lot of people, it's a good idea to introduce a social media detox during revision periods. Encourage students to switch off their phones, or move them to another room, during timetabled revision sessions. It'll help remove the temptation of distraction and focus their minds.

3

'Little and often' beats cramming

Short, regular revision sessions are far more effective than spending hours trying to cram. By allocating 15-minute blocks to a particular topic or subject, students will be better engaged and motivated. This is especially effective when learning lists, e.g. French vocabulary or scientific definitions.

4

Positive reflection

It really helps to think about how successful each revision session was. At the end of each session, encourage students to list five things they've learnt, three things they'll confidently remember and three things that they're still unsure about. When they return to their notes for further revision, they can focus on filling in the knowledge gaps.

5

Keep things in perspective

Remind your students that whilst exams and qualifications are stepping-stones to their future, they are not the be all and end all. There will always be options and alternative pathways that they can explore at school, and in later life. Approaches like mindfulness also help to create a more calm and objective mindset.

