



Dear Parents, Carers and Guardians,

As we approach the Easter holidays, the thought of spending the best part of the Easter holidays revising is not many students' idea of fun! However, studying is an inevitable part of life as a GCSE student. Studying can be made easier by following some simple steps. Research suggests that over Easter and the forthcoming weeks, students make accelerated progress in consolidating and applying their knowledge.

The aim of this letter is to help outline some strategies that may help you to support your child and revisit previous communications. At the Year 11 Passport to Success Evening earlier in the year, I shared with you (and students) a revision calendar. This is the moment to use this to harness the power of organisation. Not only does the calendar contain key dates, but also practical tips on the science of revision, learning and making knowledge stick. The revision calendar has been emailed to all students and can also be found in the Year 11 Exam Ready folder of our [Virtual School](#). In addition to this calendar, the folder contains our Lord Grey adapted version of the GCSE advanced information. Here staff have created links to recommended revision resources to complement the content. Finally, in this folder, you will find topic lists taken from GCSEPod, our powerful online learning tool to help revise content and apply knowledge through quizzes and tests.

### Getting organised

Knowing where to start with revision can be problematic itself. Common questions we get from parents/carers/guardians include 'How can I help? Should I stay out of their way? How can I avoid making them stressed?' or 'How can I make them start taking it seriously?' The Tassomi Learning Guide suggests the answers to these questions are:

1. Get into a routine- using the revision timetable and including assessments, revision periods, revision activities as well as family activities should let everyone else in the house know when crunch times are.
2. Make a plan- make sure your child is organised, has access to resources eg past papers and is revising using the best techniques.
3. Communicate- help your child to feel supported by reminding them what they need to do. Working as a team will help them to achieve success, but ultimately, your child must understand the need for them to take responsibility for their own learning during this time.
4. Little and often- ensure your child is not cramming, but carrying out short intensive activities.
5. Read up on strategies- the revision education calendar has many effective strategies such as interleaving, spaced and retrieval practice.
6. Create a working environment- where possible help create a space for your child to work. We are often consciously or unconsciously affected by environmental cues or distractions. If you can, help create a work only space.
7. Work smarter- ensure that your child is carrying out revision activities using the most impactful methods. Many students like to simply read, make notes or highlight texts as their main method of revising. Yet this is proven to be inefficient and does not make learning stick. 10 minutes of intensive quizzing has a greater impact on knowledge than reading a book or text for an hour
8. Healthy revision habits- different students react in different ways, please ensure that as well as working hard and smart, your child has some down time and fun.

## **Additional resources**

In addition to the resources found in the exam ready folder, students should have a fully completed folder of knowledge organisers. We have seen some beautiful examples of these from our students, please check that your child has theirs and is it being used? There are many online resources we also recommend. GCSEPOD has been proven to add a whole grade of performance over a year if used regularly. Other recommended online resources include:

- [Mathswatch](#) Username: pnumber@lordgrey password: triangle180
- [Corbett Maths](#)
- [Maths Genie](#)
- [Seneca](#)
- GCSE Bitesize
- [Cognito learning](#) (For Science and Maths)
- [Digital Theatre Plus](#) - Students are able to watch performances of Macbeth, An Inspector Calls and A Christmas Carol. The login details are: [year11@lordgrey.org.uk](mailto:year11@lordgrey.org.uk) and Password: LOrdGr3y
- Exam board websites (links can be found on our advanced information documents)
- Students own subject google classrooms
- [Revision World](#)

Revision World and Maths Genie (specifically for maths) have many past papers. At this stage, any effective revision programme must contain past papers. They are the number 1 revision method at this time. Past papers form part of a feedback loop; identifying weaknesses and therefore knowing what content to revise to improve. Past papers should always be used with the mark scheme and should be marked straight away to shorten the 'feedback loop'. When using past papers, please pay close attention to the Examiners' Comments, they may also be called insight reports. These will tell you where most students lost their marks or how students answered them well.

## **Spotting and supporting exam apprehension**

We know that many students will be feeling stressed or anxious over the forthcoming exams. Everyone will experience stress or feelings of apprehension in their lives, knowing how to recognise it and how to deal with it is key. Being organised and prepared will help to reduce stress. Students preparing for exams often display very similar signs of stress so it is good to be aware of a few classic archetypes. Be sure to look out for the signs listed below!

**The Ostrich:** is the student who, at the mere mention of their exams - or their revision - buries their head in the sand. They could be quite obvious in this behaviour - "I don't want to talk about it" - or it might be subtler, finding an excuse to get out of the room and avoid the topic. Waste no time in confronting this behaviour and making a plan together, because the very act of avoidance means that the revision work will pile up and the stress will increase.

**The Porcupine:** Similar to the ostrich in many respects, but rather than avoid the conversation, the Porcupine might become rather spikey and start shaking their quills. The reasons are quite similar, and the approach, likewise, requires calm, careful conversation and a structured plan to work together to remove the fear of the exams.

**The Meerkat:** You might think you've been fortunate if your child is the Meerkat: super busy, extremely diligent, revising late and requesting extra practice papers from the teacher. But this behaviour may indicate a lack of confidence and a tendency to worry. Talk to your child to make sure they're keeping things in perspective and limit the revision schedule in order to allow time for rest and relaxation.

**The Lion:** A tendency of higher-achievers - the Lion is that child who seems to have it all under control, but spending an inordinate amount of time lying around. If they're behaving as though the exams present no problems - to the point perhaps of arrogance or laziness - then it's time for a conversation. Are they hiding any anxiety or feeling like they can't ask for help, or don't know how to?

The BowerBird: A classic behaviour, not unlike the Meerkat. The BowerBird (who spends large parts of its life decorating its nest) lends its name nicely to the type of student who keeps themselves terribly busy focusing on superficial tasks like colouring in notes or organising files and revision plans. If you are the parent of a BowerBird, then talk to them, constructively, about their aims for each revision session, and check in with them regularly to see how much they have achieved.

As a parent myself, I fully appreciate the fact that parental expectations can be a double edged sword; you want to help your child to succeed and motivate them, but if the right balance is not achieved, the opposite may happen. I very much hope that the information communicated today will be of use. We will continue to update you with other key information such as around Saturday and Holiday revision as well as any exam board or government updates.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Killen', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Simon Killen