

September 2020



The Stanway School
Humanities and Maths & Computing College

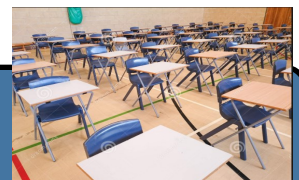
Navigating Success Evening

Advice for parents and carers

Welcome to our Navigating Success Evening, we trust that you will find the evening useful.



Year 11 Class of 2021



TOP TIPS FOR EXAM SUCCESS

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Key Subject Information – including top tips

Notes Page:

Year 11 2020-21 key dates

To ensure all students are fully prepared for the year ahead and to help you as parents support them and the school, we have prepared a list of the key dates. Please read this carefully and add the relevant dates for your son/daughter to your calendars for future reference.

Due to the current restrictions there are some events that are unable to take place, or will need to be virtual. We will aim to update you on any unconfirmed dates, as soon as we are able to.

Tuesday 15th- Friday 18th September	Post 16 Assemblies; Colchester Institute, Colchester Sixth Form College, Aim Apprenticeships & Sigma Sixth Form College. VIRTUAL.
Thursday 17th September	Yr 11 Navigating success - VIRTUAL
Wk 21st September	Begin to write Personal Statements for college/sixth form
Friday 25th September	Non pupil day
6th October	Pomodoro begins
Wednesday 7th October	Careers convention - VIRTUAL
Saturday 17th October 2020 10am-1pm Monday 19th October 2020 5pm-8pm Thursday 22nd October 2020 5pm-8pm	Colchester Institute Open Events - TBC
21st & 22nd October	Revision evenings CANCELLED
TBC	Sigma Sixth Form College Open Evening
TBC	The Royal Grammar School Open Evening
TBC	Thurstable Open Evening
TBC	Colchester Sixth Form College Open Evening
Monday 26th October – Friday 30th October	Half term
TBC	Colchester County High School for Girls Open Event
Wk 2nd November - 11th December	How to revise programme (every Tues & Weds)
Thursday 26th & Friday 27th November	Non-pupil days
Monday 21st December - Friday 1st January	Christmas Holiday
4th January	Pre public exam
10th February	Pre public exam results day
Thursday 11th February	Yr 11 Parents' Evening - TBC
Friday 31st January	College Applications Close
Monday 15th – Friday 19th February	February Half Term
Monday 22nd February	Non-pupil day
2nd & 3rd March	Revision Evening TBC
TBC	Yr 11 2 nd mock exams
Monday 29th March – Friday 9th April	Easter Holidays (with some revision classes running)
Monday 3rd May	May bank holiday
TBC	GCSE examinations (original date from 17 th May)
Monday 31st May – Friday 4th June	Half term (with some revision classes running)
TBC	GCSEs finish
TBC	Prom 7pm
TBC	GCSE results issued

Official Examination Procedures – including Mock Exams

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) gives schools strict guidance on how all examinations for all exam boards should be conducted. Both the school and candidates (our students) must follow these, failure to do so could result in students being disqualified. For this reason we will need to make the examination procedures clear to all stakeholders.

These rules apply to both Mock Examinations and the Public Examinations in the Summer Term.

- **Students must attend and be on time for all examinations.**

Like the main examinations, attendance during Mock Exams is vital, if your son or daughter is unwell we will do our best to accommodate their needs during the exam. Dr's notes will be needed if they are too unwell to come into school.

- **Students must be in full school uniform for all examinations**
- **Students need to line up in exam order, in silence** ready for the official register to be taken. (these details will be on their exam timetables).
- **All electronic devices** (including phones and smart watches) **need to be turned off and placed in bags NOT in their pockets.** Having a phone on them in the exam room, even if turned off can result in their disqualification from that paper or all papers in that exam board. (see JCQ poster below)
- **When in the exam room, students should not talk or attempt to communicate with or disturb other candidates.** This can include turning around in their seats, making silly noises or moving their chairs around.
- **Students must follow the instructions of the invigilator.**
- **Students are encouraged to bring in bottles of water, but all labels must be removed.**
- **Equipment must be stored in clear pencil cases or transparent bags.**
- **Students must not have any markings written on them.**

Mock Examinations

Students will have assessments throughout year 11 in class, however they will also be given the opportunity to complete full papers, in exam conditions. Mock exams will take place in November and March.

Although the Mock Examinations are not the real GCSE's, they are important in informing staff of necessary interventions needed in the final few months to ensure students are fully prepared for the Summer exams. They are also vital in giving students a true sense of what

the Summer examinations will be like and to help them know how they will perform under exam pressure.

We will be following the policy of 'Under 2-Redo' for all mock examination papers. Should your son/daughter receive a 2 grades or more below their target and their teacher believes they are capable of more, they will need to resit their paper or parts of their paper. They will be given support to enable them to prepare for their resit and we will inform you if your son or daughter is required to complete any resits. This is to ensure that all students complete papers to the best of their ability and are given additional support to address areas of concern and demonstrate to themselves that they are able to achieve well.



AQA	City & Guilds	CCEA	OCR	Pearson	WJEC
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**NO IPODS, MOBILE PHONES
MP3/4 PLAYERS
SMARTWATCHES**

**NO POTENTIAL TECHNOLOGICAL/WEB
ENABLED SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

**Possession of unauthorised items, such as a mobile
phone, is a serious offence and could result in**

DISQUALIFICATION

**from your examination and your overall
qualification.**

This poster must be displayed in a prominent place outside each examination room.

Top Ten Revision Tips

1. Short bursts of revision (20-40 minutes) are most effective. Your concentration lapses after about an hour and you need to take a short break (5-10 minutes).

2. Find a quiet place to revise your bedroom, school, the library and refuse to be interrupted or distracted.

3. Make sure you don't just revise the subjects and topics you like. Work on your weaker ones as well.

4. Make your own revision notes because you will remember what you have written down more easily. Stick key notes to cupboards or doors so you see them everyday.



5. Rewrite the key points of your revision notes; read them out loud to yourself. We remember more than twice as much of what we say aloud than of what we merely read.

6. Use different techniques. Make your own learning maps, use post-it notes to write key words on, create flash cards. Ask friends and family to test you. Use highlighter pens to mark important points.

7. Practise on past exam papers or revision tests available on the web. Initially do one section at a time and progress to doing an entire paper against the clock.



do

8. You will need help at some stage, ask parents, older brothers and sisters, teachers or friends. Use websites or apps specifically designed for revision.

9. **Don't get stressed out!** Eat properly and get lots of sleep!

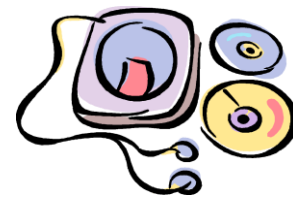
10. **Believe in yourself and be positive.** If you think you can succeed you will; if you convince yourself that you will fail, that's what will probably happen.

Getting started on revision

Where?

Find a fixed place to study (a particular desk/room at home, a spot in the library, etc.) that becomes firmly associated in your mind with productive work. All the equipment and materials you need should be within reach, and the room should be well lit and ventilated, but not too comfortable!

Turn your room into a positive learning environment. Keep books and notes on the desk to a minimum and decorate your walls with colourful notes and key facts. Music is fine as long as it helps you to study and



What?

Remember that it's all about being active and *focused on tasks, not time!* Know at the start of a session what you want to have completed. Make the tasks specific and realistic, not vague and large.

How?

Always work with a pen and paper at the ready. Getting started is often the most difficult bit, so start by 'doing'. It usually helps to begin with a subject you like, move on to other less favoured areas, and then finish up with a favoured topic to maintain the interest.

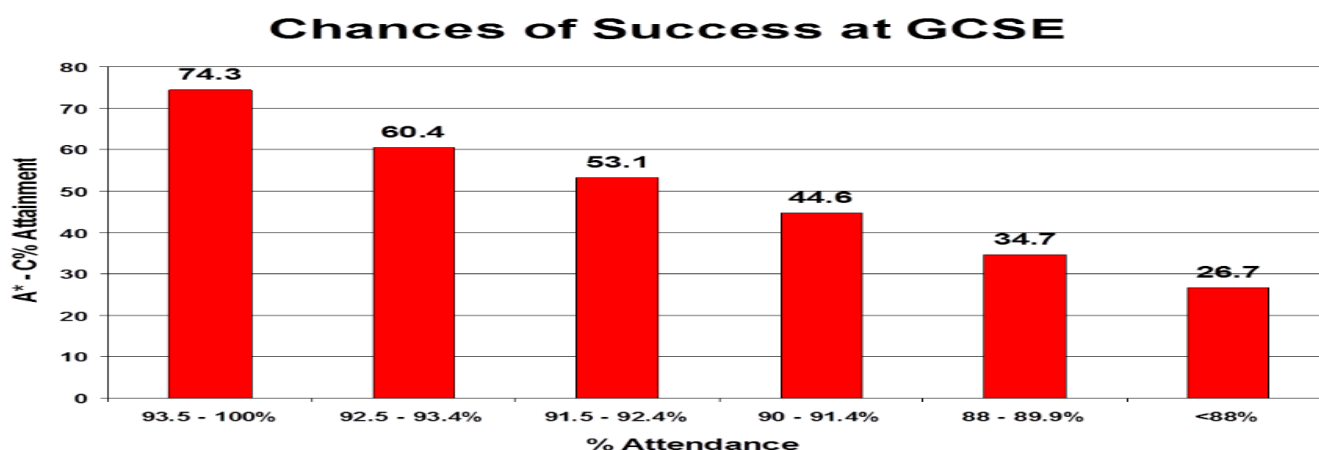
When?

Try to schedule your study for times when you are more mentally alert. Most people find their ability to focus deteriorates towards the end of the day. Getting revision done earlier in the day aids efficiency and also offers the reward of having time to relax after the work is done.

Why?

Test your progress at the end of a study session. Ask yourself "what have I just learned?" Review the material covered in your revision session. Merely recognising material isn't enough - you must be able to reproduce it without the aid of the book or note

Impact of Attendance on GCSE result's



There is a noticeable impact on student's results in GCSE with attendance. Students should try and come into school each day, even if not feeling 100%.

Revision: DO's and DON'Ts

DO

1. Make a list of all the topics you need to revise:

Each subject that you are studying can be broken down into its constituent parts, with main sections, sub-topics and supporting details. A very useful start is to list out all the topics on the course according to this hierarchy and use this as a 'revision checklist' for the subject. Tick topics off as you've learnt them.

2. Create a realistic schedule.

Block the waking part of each day into three portions. Allow yourself one portion a day off and allocate subjects and topics to the remaining two. Put the schedule on display so that your family can see when you are available. It will also reassure your parents that you are in control.



3. Plan ahead by working backwards

By using revision checklists in your various subjects, you should know what quantity of material has to be covered over the coming months. Start from the final date (end of June) and divide your revision up week by week, allowing some flexibility for unforeseen delays. Surprise yourself by being ready in time! Use the timetables and other sheets you have been given.



4. Revise using your preferred learning style.

Have you tried..... mindmaps, diagrams, colour, mnemonics, recording yourself and listening back to it, rewriting your favourite song using your revision notes for a topic as the words, walking round (Great for kinaesthetic learners – try read out the positive effects of X standing on the left hand side of the room and negative effects on the right hand side).

DON'T

Just keep going! The body and the mind need regular 'time-outs'. When you're tired, concentration is more difficult, you get distracted much easier and learning and memorisation is less effective. There comes a point in an evening study session when it is counter-productive to stay at the desk - nothing is going in and you are only tiring yourself further. Use breaks effectively, particularly after completing a task.

Learning Styles

Know how you learn best and then you can revise in ways that suit your style.



Visual learners prefer to:

- Draw pictures and diagrams
- Colour code their work
- Use different coloured paper, pens etc
- Use their own system of symbols etc
- Create images and scenes in their minds

Auditory learners prefer to:

- Say their work aloud
- Give presentations to an imaginary audience
- Record notes on a tape recorder
- Use silly noises to remember things
- Hear the information in their mind
- Play instrumental music



Kinaesthetic learners prefer to:

- Do actions when learning key facts
- Walk about when learning
- Find it harder to sit at a desk
- Add emotions and textures to exaggerate information
- Try to experience what they are learning



Try

A:

How should I revise? one of these.....

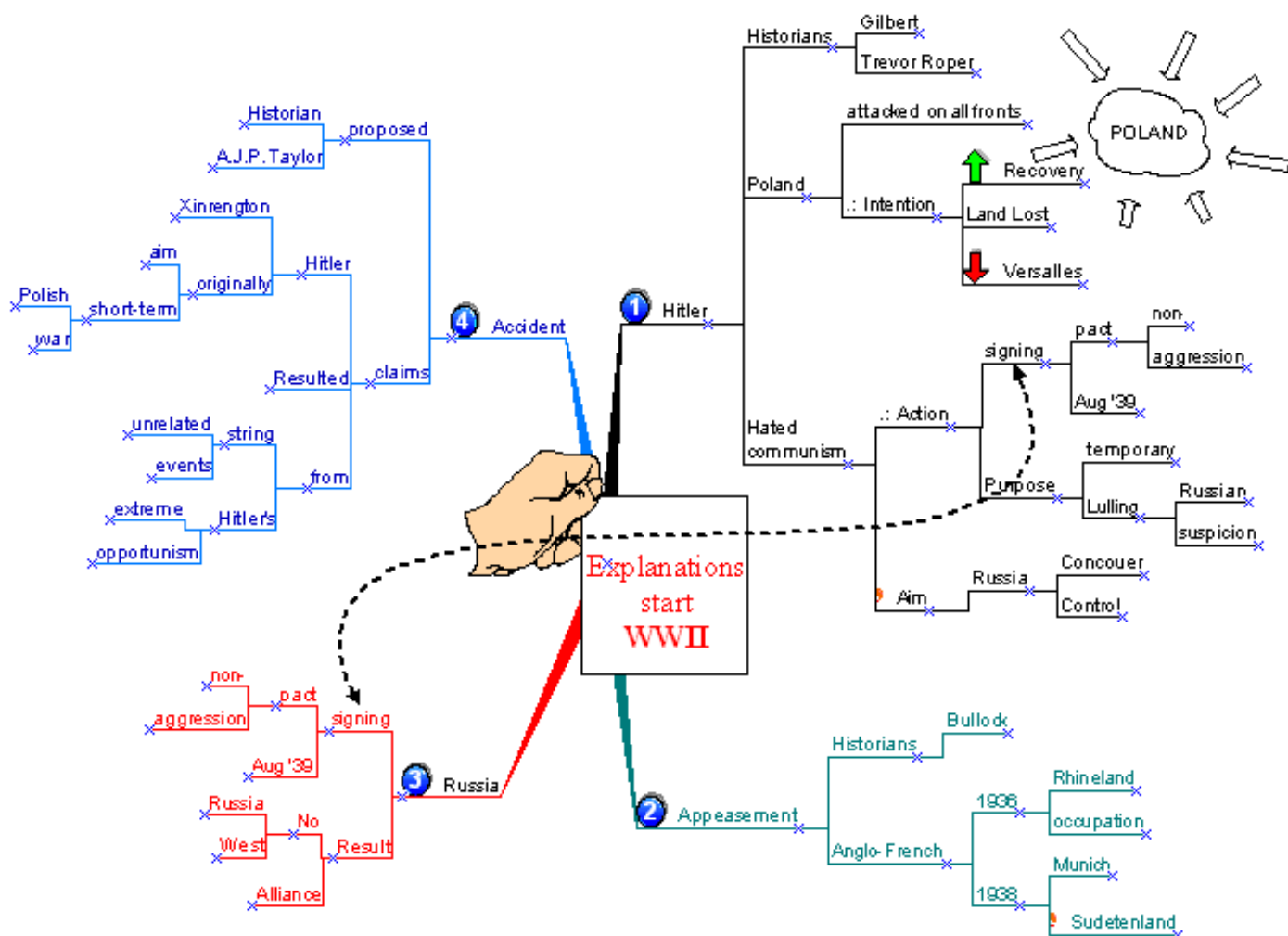
MIND MAPS: Make mindmaps or association maps rather than taking linear notes. Mapping your notes by radiating key words out in a pattern of links from a central point will make best use of your memory. If you use colour and images on the maps, you'll be harnessing the power of both sides of your brain creative and logical.

How to mind map:

1. Start with the theme in the middle of the page.
2. Then develop your main idea.
3. Each branch must relate to the branch before it.
4. Use only key words and images.
5. Key words must be written along the branches.
6. Printing your key words makes them more memorable.
7. Use highlighters and coloured markers to colour code branches.
8. Make things stand out on the page so they stand out in your mind. (This doesn't show up well on a black and white photocopied booklet! You should use a different colour for each main branch and all its sub-branches)
9. Brainstorm ideas. Be creative.
10. Design images you can relate to which will help you remember key information.



Mind maps can be mostly text but they will be most effective when images and colour are used alongside them.

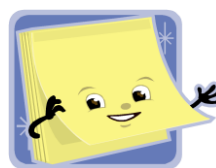


Or they can include more images (much easier to remember!) Look at this one summarising William Shakespeare's life..... (again – much better in colour!)



B: Read intelligently. Spend five minutes flipping through a book or your notes looking at headings and summaries. Then attempt to mind map what you have spotted and what you can remember.

C: Use cards. Write questions on one side and answers on the other. Merely creating the cards will help your recall. You can also use them to test yourself when faced with 'dead' time at bus stops or waiting for someone.



other. Then get your recall. You can also use them to test yourself when faced with 'dead' time at bus stops or waiting for someone.

D: Physical learning: Use the environment Use a different room for each subject.

- ❖ Notice aspects of the environment such as the light or feel of the room - how do you feel in that place?
- ❖ Attach your notes to the furniture. Notice their location.
- ❖ Associate a different location with each subject. Associate furniture, windows, plants and ornaments with particular topics.

Using your clothes

- ❖ Associate items of clothing with topics in your learning - a shoe could represent one aspect of foreign policy; each button on a shirt could represent a quotation. Clothes with patterns, pockets and buttons are especially useful.

Using the parts of your body

- ❖ Parts of your body are especially helpful as triggers to memory, as your body will be there in the exam room! For example, each hand could represent an essay plan – each finger one major topic; each segment of each finger a principal reference you would use. The fingernails could represent counterarguments; the knuckles could be associated with relevant quotations.

Use motor memory

- ❖ Study on the move. If you exercise, associate each movement with something you wish to remember. To refresh the memory, go through the exercise in your mind.
- ❖ Writing, drawing and speaking also use motor memory: the fine-muscle sequence is recorded by the brain.

E: Condense. Fitting notes onto one side of paper, rewrite and cut down as you go.

F: Highlight. Target key areas using colours and symbols. Visuals help you remember the facts.

G: Record. Try putting important points, quotes and formulae on tape. If you hear them and read them, they're more likely to sink in.

H: Talk. Read your notes out loud, it's one way of getting them to register.

I: Test. See what you can remember without notes, but avoid testing yourself on subjects you know already. Why not ask someone else to test you?

J: Time. Do past exam papers against the clock, it's an excellent way of getting up to speed and of checking where there are gaps in your knowledge.

Reading Better and Faster

Most students, when faced with a textbook or chapter to study, will 'start at the beginning, read through at the same pace until the end, then stop and put the book away'. This passive approach is a most inefficient way to learn, as it can take longer and leave you bogged down in detail, with no overall grasp of the subject matter. By adopting a more *active* approach to reading, you can begin to read better and faster within a very short space of time. The **PQ2R** method has proved to be most successful in this regard. Try it for the remaining weeks of term and see the benefits.

P = Preview

Begin your reading task with a quick skim (2-3 minutes) of the text, trying to get an overview of the chapter or text. Look for section headings, illustrative charts and diagrams, signposts or key words. Don't start highlighting text at this point.

Q = Question

This is the key to active learning. Look for answers to the basic questions of "Who?", "What?", "Where?", "Why?" and "When?" Identify the main theme or learning point of the particular text.

R = Read

Now read the chapter carefully, with these questions in mind. Your mind will be actively looking for answers as you read. Work with a pen and paper, make brief summary notes, look for 'topic sentences' that summarise the most important point in a paragraph or section and highlight them, if necessary. Vary your reading speed - move quickly over lighter, less important material and slow down when you come to a difficult section.

R = Review

Always check your understanding of the material by reviewing and testing your recall before putting the text away. Look at the notes you have taken and check that they answer your initial questions. Summarise your findings from this study session.

Making Your Notes Useful

The purpose of making summary notes on a topic or section is to aid your overall understanding of material, to help you distinguish between what is really important information (*depth*) and what is merely supporting *detail*. Reference to the main syllabus topics will help the process of discernment within each subject.

In addition, good summary notes make retrieval of information quicker and easier.

- **Sort out your filing system**

If you haven't already done so, get your subject folders and notes organised immediately. Invest in some ring binders, dividers, plastic pockets, etc. Have a separate folder for each subject (a permanent reference point) and then keep a 'current folder' for managing notes in progress.

- **Less is always more**

When writing notes, remember they should contain a summary, not an extensive repetition of what is in the textbook. Don't crowd the page. Stick to main headings and sub-headings. Use abbreviations where appropriate. Try to reduce what you need to know on the topic down to one A4 sheet. Once you have an overview, it is easier to fill out the detail.

- **Make your notes visual**

Ensure your notes have a memorable appearance so that you can recall them easily. Use illustrations, diagrams, graphs, colours, and boxes ('a picture is worth a thousand words'). Arrange the material in a

logical hierarchy (title, sub-point, explanation, example). Ideally, you should be able to close your eyes in an exam and visualise a particular page of notes.

- **Beware of transcribing and highlighting!**

Merely re-writing the text from the book into your notes does not ensure retention. Try to put things in your own words and devise your own examples - this will make the material more meaningful. Only use the highlighter pen AFTER you have previewed and questioned a text, thus ensuring you identify the most important material and you avoid the creation of a fluorescent textbook!

- **'Save' your notes carefully**

Practice following the logic of your computer files, when storing information. Think - "Where does this material best fit (subject, section, topic, sub-topic, etc.)?" In this way, you will ensure that it is efficiently processed and easily retrieved both physically (during revision) and mentally (when you need it in an exam).

Improving Memory

We often blame our memory for poor academic performance ("I'm no good at remembering names / dates / rules / verbs / characteristics") when really we should be addressing our faulty input and storage system. There is a big difference between short-term and long-term memory. If you study a topic one night and can recall most of it the next morning, don't be fooled into thinking that you will be able to remember it accurately in two months time.

If the goal is to improve your long-term memory, then the key to success is based on the efficiency of input (the 'mental filing system' we employ). Reducing the burden on the limited short-term memory, and channelling information into long-term storage, is based on the creation of patterns and the avoidance of randomness.

- **'Chunking':** as the average person can only hold seven 'items' in short-term memory, grouping items together into 'chunks' can increase capacity. This is generally used for remembering numbers (think of how you remember phone numbers by grouping the seven digits into 2 or 3 chunks) but can be applied to other listings in various subjects.
- **Repetition:** Studies indicate that 66% of material is forgotten within seven days if it is not reviewed or recited again by the student, and 88% is gone after six weeks. Don't make life harder for yourself - build in a brief daily and weekly review of material covered. It will save you having to re-learn material from scratch! Quick quizzes are great for this.
- **Application and association:** The best way to channel material to long-term memory is to organise it into meaningful associations. Link it to existing information and topics and create vivid personal examples which act as 'mental hooks' or 'cues' for recalling material in the future. Thus, new items are put in context. If you learn a new formula / verb / rule, try to put it into practice immediately with a relevant example.
- **Use of mnemonics:** these are various word games which can act as memory aids and which allow personalisation and creativity. Think of *stalagtites* (come down from the ceiling) and *stalagmites* (go up from the ground); the colours of the rainbow - **Roy G. Biv** ('Richard Of York Gave Battle In Vain' to remember red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet); the seven characteristics of living organisms - **Mr. Grief** (Movement, Reproduction, Growth, Respiration, Irritability, Excretion, Feeding). You can devise many more of these to aid your personalised recall of items in your subjects.

Review

Looking over a topic every now and then will help to keep it in the memory, taking away the need to cram before exams.

Make a summary of the work and look over it ten minutes later, the next day, the next week and then the next month for a few minutes each time. This reinforces the knowledge learned.

Understanding increases as time spent studying passes. However, the ability to recall things being memorised becomes progressively less efficient as time passes in a study session.

20 minutes is needed for the mind to get into the rhythm of and flow of the material. Any more than 40 minutes spent memorising means that memory declines to a point where it is no longer valuable.

The answer in revision lessons therefore is to do 30 minutes with a 5-minute stretch break and then review the topic.

After a one hour memorising session:

10 minutes later revise the topic for 10 minutes

1 day later revise the topic for 5 minutes

1 week later revise the topic for 2-5 minutes

1 month later revise the topic for 2-5 minutes

Before exams revise the topic as required.

Each time knowledge is reinforced; it enters deeper into the long-term memory and becomes more stable.

Practising Output

To prepare for an exam, ***you must practice doing what the exam requires you to do; giving out information, not taking it in!*** This applies to regular class tests as well as the final exams.

Prior to May, you will probably have had the benefit of many class tests and some modular exams where the GCSE conditions are simulated for your benefit – you can learn a lot by reflecting honestly on your performance in these tests. You also have the benefit of a wealth of freely available information about the exams. Past exam papers, marking schemes, study guides and examiners reports are all there to be used.

- **Make use of past papers**

These should be your constant companion in all revision tasks. For each topic you revise, consult the past questions on this subject and then attempt answers to them. Check your answers, fill in the 'knowledge gaps' where necessary, and file away the correct 'model answer' in your notes for future reference. You will also start to notice any trends in the questions asked.

- **Follow the marks**

Marking schemes are an invaluable aid to exam preparation (available online from DfES, AQA, etc). You can see how the marks are allocated for each question on the paper and what quantity or style of answer is required in each case. This knowledge will greatly inform your revision work and helps to remove the mystique of the exam.

Try a dress rehearsal

Each exam paper contains its own particular structure and challenge, with varying emphasis on answering style and depth. While much of your ongoing revision will be based on individual topics and questions, it is a very useful exercise to tackle an exam paper in its totality (at least once before May). It forces you to consider your strategy – the questions you will want to attempt or avoid, the issues of timing, the number of points you will need to make in each part of a question. Having performed this exercise a couple of times, your confidence levels rise as you fix on your strategy for the exam and realise that there can't be any major surprises for you in May/June.

The Examiner's View

You can largely determine the end result by simply heeding the voice of experience. The job of examiners is to give you marks, not to take them away, but they are powerless to help you if you fall into the most common traps. These are the **biggest pitfalls** they have identified:

- **Not reading the paper correctly**

Examiners say that this is one of the most regular and fatal errors. They call it the '*triggered answer*'. You have your pre-prepared answer ready but you don't look at the exact terms of the question and therefore supply the wrong information in your answer.

- **Not finishing the paper**

Mismanaging your time within the exam can easily cost you a full grade. The biggest exam 'crime' is to leave suitable questions unattempted. **Remember: it is much easier to get the first 20% of the marks for any question than the last 5%.** Therefore, if you find yourself stuck for time as you struggle through your third answer out of five, do not spend your remaining time extending and perfecting that answer. Instead, move on to questions four and five, even if your attempt is sketched or in point form. If you have answered only three questions instead of five, the highest mark you can get is 60%.

- **Ignoring the marking scheme**

You must take the marking scheme into account when you allocate time to each question or part of a question. If the marks allotted to a question clearly indicate that a few paragraphs are sufficient, do not write an essay on the subject. Avoid the temptation of writing everything you know about a topic – just give the appropriate amount of information.

- **Repetition**

Make the point once. There are no extra marks for restating facts, even if you phrase them differently. Examiners say repetition is a very common mistake. It is also a time-waster and an irritant.

- **Missing part of a question**

Sometimes, part of a question can be carried onto the next page and, in the pressure of the moment, you don't see it. As a consequence you might fail to do a compulsory part of a question or miss out on the chance to take an option that would have suited you better. Always take time to familiarise yourself with the whole paper before you start answering it.

- **Irrelevant quotations**

In literary subjects, don't use irrelevant quotations you may have learned off, as it only irritates the examiner.

- **Rough work**

Include your rough work with your exam script – you might get some credit for formulae or calculations contained therein.

Performing on the Day



- **Get a good night's sleep**

While the temptation is to stay up half the night 'cramming' in more facts and figures, the evidence suggests this approach is counter-productive. In the context of a two-year course, an extra night's studying can make very little difference to your knowledge. However, having a mind that is refreshed, alert, and ready to respond to circumstances will obviously be of far greater benefit.

- **Allow your brain time to wake up:** Have a shower, eat breakfast – take a banana with you.

- **Arrive in plenty of time:** To perform well on the day, you need to be relaxed and to feel in control of the situation. This is difficult to achieve if you have missed breakfast and are stuck on a bus in traffic or standing on a train for 45 minutes as the exam time approaches. You will need about 15 minutes 'quiet time' to mentally rehearse your exam and run through your 'game plan'.

- **Have your equipment ready**

Each exam has its own requirements. Apart from properly functioning pens, pencils, rulers, etc, you may need a calculator for the Maths or Science exam. Drawing pencils may be required for diagrams in some subjects. Take a pen you enjoy writing with, take 2.

- **Think positive**

On the day of the exam, remind yourself of the good things (the material you know well, the revision you have completed, all the past exam questions done, the good grades achieved) rather than dwelling on areas of weakness. Having that self-belief will give you the confidence to trust your judgement.

- **Maintain your focus**

There can be a lot of tension, drama, and hysteria in the air on the days of an exam. You want to keep the balance between maintaining your focus and interacting normally with your friends. Try finding a quiet spot *far from the madding crowd* to 'warm-up' before each exam and 'warm-down' afterwards. Surround yourself with people who are likely to add to the calm rather than stress.

- **Beware of post-exam analysis**

Don't worry about the exam when you have finished it, you will just get more confused and disheartened. You can't change what has happened, you can only focus on the present.

During the exam

- It's natural to be nervous, it actually helps the brain by giving it the extra adrenaline it needs to make the final effort.

- If your mind goes blank, don't worry. Look at the question again, write down some notes – it will get your brain ticking over again.

- Don't start writing until you have read the instructions – think about how you have been taught to answer a question like that

- Keep to the correct time for each question.

- Check over your answers especially any with additional SPAG marks, this can make the difference to your grade.

On the evening of the exam for parents

- Don't add to the stress by "rising to the bait" when they push boundaries. Shelve the battles that don't need winning just yet.

- Help them prepare – talk to them about when it starts, how long it lasts, what topics may come up.

- Make sure they get a good night sleep and eat in the morning.

Top Tips on Exam Strategy

Success in exams involves two ingredients - having a thorough knowledge of the subject matter AND making the most of your knowledge in the exam through effective answering technique. Two students with identical knowledge and attainment levels can sit the same exam and their final grades can differ by as much as 25%. The difference is down to having an effective strategy and exam technique.



Here are four golden rules to apply to all your GCSE papers:

1. **Allow time to read the paper carefully**

The importance of reading the paper carefully and choosing your questions wisely cannot be emphasised enough at this stage. The natural inclination is always to start writing immediately and launch into a favoured topic. Resist the urge. Take your time. Be smart and size-up the paper before answering.

2. **Stick to your game plan**

An overall strategy should have emerged from your revision and exam preparation in each subject. This covers the areas you will tackle, the topics you will avoid if they appear on the paper, the sequence in which you will tackle the various sections, the style of answering you will employ in each subject, the amount of time you will allocate to answering each section. In some cases, this plan will work like a dream but there will always be surprises to deal with in some papers. Don't get flustered. Stick to your game plan, trust your judgement, and move on.

3. **Sweep up any mistakes**

In the pressure of the exam hall, it is easy to make elementary errors. These will sometimes have the potential to lose you a lot of valuable marks. Misreading the instruction on a question can render an entire answer invalid. You might have known the correct answer, but you didn't put it down. A simple miscalculation can lose you valuable time as you try to figure out the balancing item. Be disciplined with your time. Always leave a few minutes at the end to tidy-up errors. Simply changing a definition / formula / calculation at this stage could be the difference between a good and an average grade.

4. **Attempt all questions**

It is amazing how many exam scripts are handed in unfinished. Every year, capable students who just didn't get time to finish the paper lose easy marks. Don't fall into this trap. Work on the basis that you will get an answer written for the required number of questions. Remember that it is much easier to get the first 20% of the marks for any question than the final 5%. You can always polish an answer further but, if there is no attempt made at part of a question, the examiner can't give you any marks. BUT if the instructions on the front of the paper tell you to answer a certain number of questions – stick to this - don't answer too many!

Some key terms used in examination questions

<p>Account for Explain the process or reason for something being the way it is.</p>	<p>Discuss Explore the subject by looking at its advantages and disadvantages (i.e. for and against). Attempt to come to some sort of judgement.</p>
<p>Analyse Explore the main ideas of the subject, show they are important and how they are related.</p>	<p>Distinguish Explain the difference.</p>
<p>Calculate Find out using mathematics.</p>	<p>Enumerate Make a list of the points under discussion.</p>
<p>Comment on Discuss the subject, explain it and give an opinion on it.</p>	<p>Estimate Guess the amount or value.</p>
<p>Compare Show the similarities (but you can also point out the differences).</p>	<p>Explain Describe, giving reasons and causes.</p>
<p>Complete Finish off.</p>	<p>Express Put the ideas into words.</p>
<p>Conclude Decide after reasoning something out.</p>	<p>Evaluate Give an opinion by exploring the good and bad points. It's a bit like asking you to assess something. Attempt to support your argument with expert opinion.</p>
<p>Concise Short and brief.</p>	<p>Factors The fact or circumstances that contribute to a result.</p>
<p>Contrast Show the differences ~ compare and contrast questions are very common in exams – they want you to say how something is similar and how it may be different too.</p>	<p>Give an account of Describe.</p>
<p>Criticise Analyse and then make a judgement or give an opinion. You could show both the good and bad points. You could refer to an expert's opinion within this question.</p>	<p>Give reasons for Use words like because in your answer as you will be explaining how or why something is that way.</p>
<p>Define Give the meaning. This should be short.</p>	<p>Identify Recognise, prove something as being certain.</p>
<p>Describe Give a detailed account.</p>	<p>Illustrate Show by explaining and giving examples.</p>
<p>Differentiate Explore and explain the difference.</p>	<p>Indicate Point out, make something known.</p>

Interpret Explain the meaning by using examples/opinion	Relate Show the connection between things.
Justify Give a good reason for offering an opinion.	State Write briefly the main points.
List An item-by-item record of relevant images. This would normally be in note form without any need to be descriptive.	Summarise Give the main points of an idea or argument. Leave out unnecessary details that could cloud the issue.
Outline Concentrate on the main bits of the topic or item. Ignore the minor detail.	Trace Show how something has developed from beginning to end.
Prove Give real evidence, not opinion, which proves an argument and shows it to be true.	

Answering Exam Questions

1. Scan **all** the questions. **ONLY ANSWER THE ONES YOU HAVE STUDIED**
2. Mark all the questions you could answer.
3. Read these questions carefully.
4. Choose the correct number of questions in each section.
5. Decide on an order: **best answers first**.
6. Divide up your time, allowing more time for the questions with the most marks.
7. Underline the key words in the question.
8. Plan your answer.
9. Stick to the point of the question.
10. Write your answer.
11. Use the plan at every stage – e.g. every paragraph.
12. Check your answer against the plan. Look out for mistakes.
13. If you have time, re-read the questions and your answers and make corrections.



Dealing with distractions

- *"I just start daydreaming"*

Become an active learner. Always work with a pen and paper. Focus on a specific task, not a specified time for your study.

- *"I can't focus because I'm anxious about the exams"*

Try to limit yourself to your immediate concerns, the things you have some control over (preparation for the upcoming revision test) rather than the things you cannot determine (like what questions the examiners will choose for this year's English Lit paper.)

- *"I often fall asleep when I'm supposed to be studying"*

Try to get to bed on time over the coming weeks. A tired brain is very unproductive. Get some genuine rest at the weekend. Be sure to get regular exercise, even just a walk around the block at night to clear your head.

- *"I'm constantly interrupted by other people"*

Study in the location most likely to offer peace and quiet. Ask for consideration from family members over the final run up to exams. Never have a TV, phone, computer game, or music system within arm's reach while you are trying to work. Make a rule of not taking phone calls within certain defined periods.

- *"I keep thinking of other things while I'm studying"*

Divide the study session into smaller, short-range goals which demand your full attention e.g. vocabulary or poetry test. Keep a 'reminder pad' beside you, a little notebook to jot down something that strikes you (someone to call, a job to do, etc.) and deal with it after the study period. Having made a note of it, you can more easily re-focus on your work.

Websites to help your revision:

REMEMBER: Making your own revision notes from your classwork and homework are the most effective forms of revision notes. However, there are a number of online revision sites.

Seneca – Online quiz based learning.

GCSE POD is a valuable tool – if you can't remember your log in ask pastoral for it. This has a wide range of short video and audio pod casts that can be used on the move or at home.

GCSE Bitsize is great for all subjects.

You will be given a subject specific websites at parents evening.





Connect with Others



Connecting with others is important for your mental wellbeing. It can:

- Help you build a sense of belonging and self-worth
- Give you an opportunity to share positive experiences
- Provide emotional support and allow you to support others



- Take time each day to be with your family e.g. eating together at the dinner table
- Arrange a day out with friends you haven't seen for a while
- Try switching off the TV to talk or play a game with your family and/or friends
- Have lunch with a friend
- Visit a friend or family member who needs support or company
- Make the most of technology by staying in touch with FaceTime, Skype, or Zoom
- Search and download online community apps on the NHS apps library

<https://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/category/online-community/>

CONNECTION CHALLENGES





Acts of giving and kindness can help improve your mental well-being by:

- Creating positive feelings and a sense of reward
- Giving you a feeling of purpose and self-worth
- Helping you connect with other people



GIVING CHALLENGES



- Try random acts of kindness towards other people (see the squares below)
- Try larger acts such as volunteering in your local community e.g. with a club or at a care home
- Say thank you to someone for something they have done for you
- Ask friends or family how they are and really listen to their answer
- Spend time with family or friends who need support or company
- Offer help to someone you know with a DIY or school project

PICK UP LITTER IN THE PARK

SMILE AT EVERYONE YOU SEE TODAY

PICK A FEW TOYS TO DONATE

COMPLIMENT 5 PEOPLE TODAY

SAY THANK YOU TO YOUR TEACHERS

LET SOMEONE GO AHEAD OF YOU IN LINE

PLAY WITH SOMEONE NEW

HOLD THE DOOR FOR SOMEONE

GIVE SOMEONE A FLOWER

GIVE SOMEONE A HUG

CLEAN UP WITHOUT BEING ASKED

WRITE A THANK YOU LETTER

DO A SIBLING'S CHORE

CREATE A CARE PACKAGE

DONATE A CAN OF FOOD

OFFER TO HELP A FRIEND

The Stanway Snippets

1. Try one of the connection challenges.
2. Try one of the giving challenges.
3. Try downloading an online community app from the NHS apps library.
4. Try picking a 'Heart Snack' from the book 'Feel Better in 5'.





Diet



Diets high in plant foods such as fruits, vegetables, legumes e.g. beans/lentils and wholegrains e.g. brown rice/bread are associated with a lower risk of mental health conditions.

The more healthy food you eat the better your mental health.



Diets high in processed foods e.g. takeaway foods, sugary foods and processed meats are associated with a higher risk of mental health conditions.

Diets high in saturated fats and processed sugars e.g. fizzy drinks, pastries and sweets are associated with poorer mental health in young people.

PROCESSED FOODS EXPLAINED



Food as it would be found in nature. These foods are generally highest in nutrients and fiber.

WWW.CHRISVOGLIANO.COM



Food that is canned, frozen, trimmed, or preserved. These foods still contain essential nutrients. Be careful of added sugar, fat, and salt.



Food which contain few nutrients and fiber. These foods are usually sourced from corn, soy, or wheat with added fat and. Many packaged foods fall into this category.

The Stanway Snippets

1. Try eating less processed foods.
2. Try eating more fruits and vegetables - aim for 5 a day.
3. Try drinking at least 2 litres of water a day.
4. Try starting with some small changes and gradually make more.
5. Try eating breakfast, lunch and dinner.
6. Try helping with the cooking at home - try to make a Mediterranean-style dinner.



Exercise



Any type & intensity can be helpful. Here's just some of the findings:

- Moderate intensity for happiness
- High intensity for low mood
- Resistance training for anxiety
- Walking outside for self-esteem



The NICE recommendations for physical activity for young people are:

- At least 60 minutes a day
- At least 2x a week weight-bearing activity
- Moderate to vigorous
 - Moderate - heart rate able to be felt
 - Vigorous - out of breath and sweating
- Can be done in short, 10 minute bouts
- Can include anything where your body is moving!

STRONG IMMUNE SYSTEM

REDUCED RISK OF HEART DISEASE

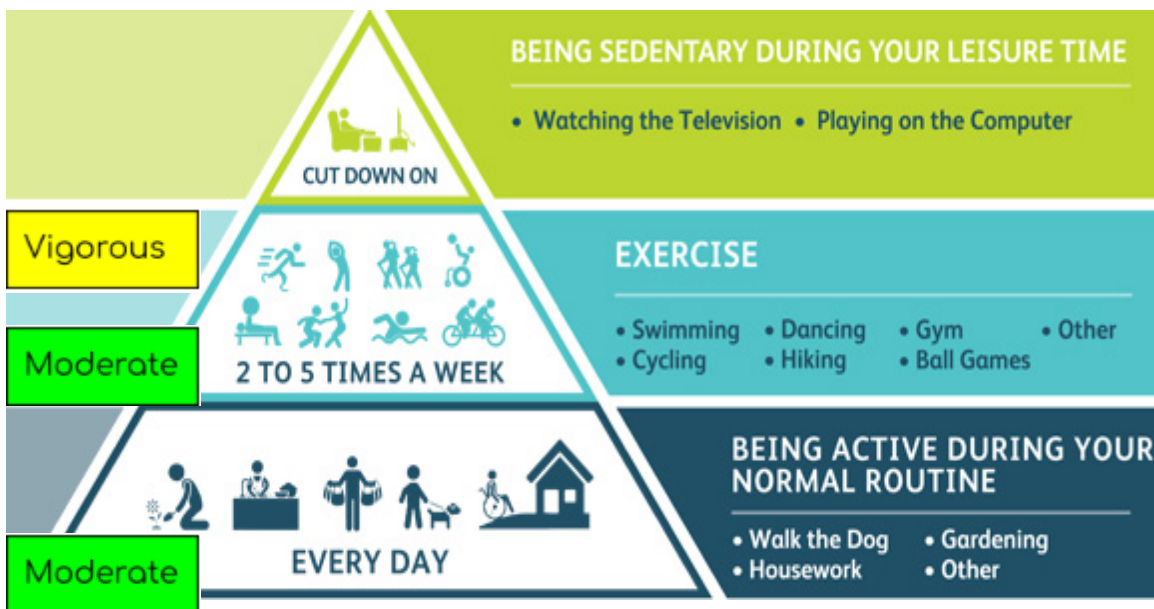
IMPROVED BLOOD PRESSURE

IMPROVED BRAIN FUNCTION

STRENGTHENS MUSCLE

STRENGTHENS LUNGS

WEIGHT CONTROL



PHYSICAL BENEFITS

The Stanway Snippets

1. Try doing something you love - you're more likely to stick to it.
2. Try exercising with your friends and your family.
3. Try picking three 'Body Snacks' from the book 'Feel Better in 5'.
4. Try creating a plan.
5. Start small and gradually add more.
6. Try to not make the exercise too easy or too hard.



Learn New Skills



Learning new skills can improve your mental wellbeing by:

- Boosting self-confidence and raising self-esteem
- Helping you to build a sense of purpose
- Helping you connect with others



The NHS recommends trying to:



Learn to cook something new



Learn & try basic home DIY



Learn a new instrument



Find a new hobby

The Stanway Snippets

1. Try one of the NHS recommendations.
2. Try one of the skills from the websites below.
3. Try a new 'snack' from the book 'Feel Better in 5'.
4. Try to link something new to something you already do.
5. Try to learn a new skill with a friend or a family member.

10 life skills for a teen to learn

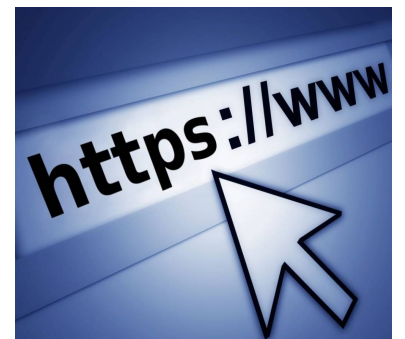
<http://www.imom.com/10-life-skills-your-teen-needs-before-leaving-home/#.XuNxDOVKiUk>

50 amazing skills to learn on YouTube

<https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/572087/learn-skills-on-youtube>

9 skills to master in lockdown

<https://blog.kidadl.com/articles/new-skills-teens>





Nature and Greenspaces

Humans are naturally drawn to nature and greenspaces. They help to improve mood and reduce stress from just being in the environment.



The benefits of nature and greenspaces on mental health are great! For example:

- Just looking at pictures can improve overall mental health
- Walking in nature and greenspaces can improve mood
- The longer you do it for, the better the improvements in mood
- Self-esteem and mood improve when you exercise in nature/greenspaces
- The best improvements in mental health was through short duration, light intensity exercise near water



The Stanway Snippets

1. Try getting involved in helping with the school garden.
2. Try identifying natural environments and greenspaces near you.
3. Try going for a walk in nature/greenspaces near you.
4. Try exercising at least once a week in nature/greenspaces e.g. run.
5. Try changing your phone background to a natural environment.
6. Try spending time in nature/greenspaces with family and friends.



Relax



Meditation & mindfulness are ways you can relax. This helps to:

- Reduces stress & anxiety
- Improves sleep
- Improves mood and reduces symptoms of depression
- Improves concentration & focus
- Improves resilience and coping skills
- Can improve school attendance and behaviour

Mindfulness is the awareness of “some-thing,” while meditation is the awareness of “no-thing.”

LEARN TO MEDITATE

You can learn and practice meditation in a number of ways. One of the best is guided meditation through an app. You could try one of these:



Traditional meditation is not for everyone. You can get similar benefits from:

- Quiet reading
- Breathing exercises
- Sitting quietly
- Listening to calming music



fantastic ideas for mindfulness

Here are a few exercises you could try. You don't need any special equipment:

- **Mindful eating.** This involves paying attention to the taste, sight and textures of what you eat. For example, when drinking a cup of tea or coffee you could focus on how hot and liquid it feels on your tongue, how sweet it tastes or watch the steam that it gives off.
- **Mindful moving, walking or running.** Notice the feeling of your body moving. You might notice the breeze against your skin, the feeling of your feet or hands against different textures on the ground or nearby surfaces, and the different smells that are around you.
- **Body scan.** This is where you move your attention slowly through different parts of the body, starting from the top of your head moving all the way down to the end of your toes. You could focus on feelings of warmth, tension, tingling or relaxation of different parts of your body.
- **Mindful colouring and drawing.** Focus on the colours and the sensation of your pencil against the paper, rather than trying to draw something in particular. You could use a mindfulness colouring book or download mindfulness colouring images.

The Stanway Snippets

1. Try it and start small - try doing 5 minutes.
2. Try doing it every day at a specific time - be consistent & patient.
3. Try using guided meditation apps such as Calm/Headspace (or even YouTube/Spotify).
4. If you don't like it try an alternative like e.g. quiet reading or breathing exercises.
5. Try some of the fantastic ideas for mindfulness.
6. Try picking a 'Mind Snack' from the book 'Feel Better in 5'.



Sleep



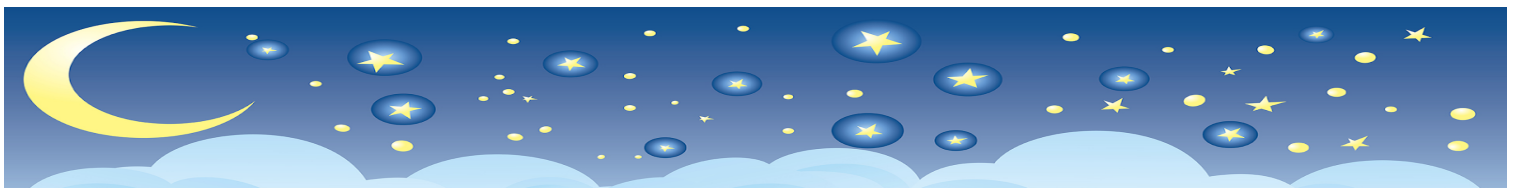
Poor sleep and poor mental health interact and affect each other. In other words, mental health conditions can affect sleep, and sleep can affect your mental health.

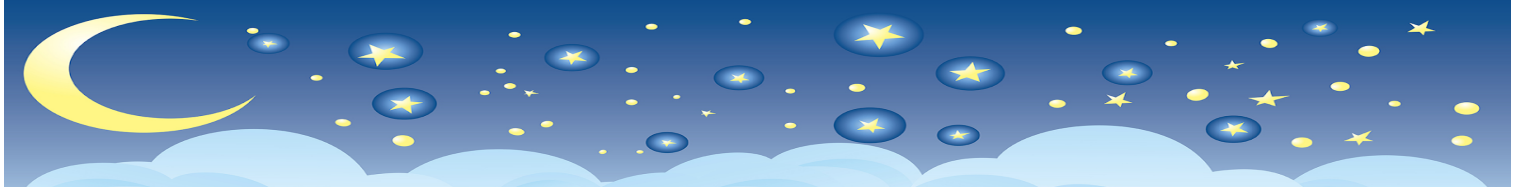
SLEEP HYGIENE

HELPFUL TIPS TO HELP YOU SLEEP

- 1 Products containing caffeine (tea, coffee, cocoa, chocolate, soft drinks, etc.) should be discontinued at least 4 hours before bedtime. Caffeine is a stimulant and can keep you awake.
- 2 Avoid nicotine (including nicotine patches or chewing gum, etc) an hour before bedtime and when waking at night. Nicotine is also a stimulant.
- 3 Avoid alcohol around bedtime because although it can promote sleep at first, it can disrupt sleep later in the night.
- 4 Avoid eating a large meal immediately before bedtime, although a light snack may be beneficial.
- 5 Try to do regular (even mild) physical exercise if you are able, but avoid doing this in the 2 hours before bedtime.
- 6 Keep the bedroom calm and tidy. Select a mattress, sheets, and pillows that are comfortable.
- 7 Avoid making your bedroom too hot or too cold.
- 8 Keep the bedroom quiet and darkened during the night, but try to spend some time in daylight (or bright artificial light) during the day.
- 9 Keep your bedroom mainly for sleeping; try to avoid watching television, listening to the radio, or eating in your bedroom.
- 10 Try to keep regular times for going to bed and getting up.

Do you do these as part of your bedtime routine? If not give them a try and see the positive effects :)





		Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
	Enter the Weekday (Mon, Tues, Wed, etc.)							
1	At what time did you go to bed last night?							
2	After settling down, how long did it take you to fall asleep?							
3	After falling asleep, about how many times did you wake up in the night?							
4	After falling asleep, for how long were you awake during the night <u>in total</u> ?							
5	At what time did you finally wake up?							
6	At what time did you get up?							
7	How long did you spend in bed last night (from first getting in, to finally getting up)							
8	How would you rate the <u>quality</u> of your sleep last night? 1 2 3 4 5 V. Poor V. Good							

Try to track your sleep over a week or more to see your progress.

The Stanway Snippets

1. Try including the sleep hygiene tips above as part of your bedtime routine.
2. Try tracking your sleep over the next two weeks to see if it improves.