



Plymouth High School for Girls

"For life, not school, we learn"

19th October 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

As you are aware students will be sitting mock examinations in all their GCSE subjects from the week commencing the 30th November.

Staff have worked tirelessly since we returned to school in September to ensure that the students are supported in their studies and that gaps in their understanding are addressed. Students have received revision lists and revision resources from their teachers through the Google Classroom. There is a wealth of information on these google classroom areas for the students to use in order to help prepare them for examinations. This ranges from past papers to video clips, from worksheets to revision mind maps.

Examinations, real or not, are undoubtedly nerve-racking for students and their parents. Fraught mums and dads watch over their children and wonder to what degree they should be helping. So, with that in mind, here are ten tips on how to help students to revise effectively, taken from the Good Schools Guide.

1. Encourage your child to make a revision timetable – and stick to it.
2. Make sure your child has a quiet space to work, with no distractions.
3. Help to find the method of learning and retaining information that works best for them. It could be reading and making notes, using flash cards or Post-it notes, looking at video clips, playing back recordings of their own voice, mind mapping or perhaps a mixture of these.
4. Check the exam specifications. All exam boards publish these, along with practice papers and mark schemes too. Many of these will be on the google classroom.
5. Search out revision apps and online resources – such as BBC Bitesize and Gojimo. Teenagers sometimes concentrate on their best subjects and leave their weaker ones till the end but it is a good idea to tackle weak areas early on.
6. Be around as much as possible. You don't have to be at their side 24/7 but children like parents taking an interest in their revision (but not taking over).

7. Keep the kitchen cupboard stocked with delicious food. When the going gets tough children really appreciate a cup of tea, a plate of biscuits or their favourite meal.
8. Encourage them to break revision into manageable chunks and to take regular breaks in between revision sessions. It's far more effective to do 30 minutes of successful revision – rather than plough on for hours on end and not get anywhere. This is backed up by research by academics at the University of Sheffield who found that learning is more effective when spread out over stretches of time.
9. Exercise, fresh air, healthy food and lots of sleep are crucial.
10. Most important of all, help your child to keep everything in perspective. Remind them that the better they prepare and the more confident they feel in their subject knowledge the less stressed they will feel when the exams start.

The mock examinations play a very important role in preparing year 11 students for their real exams at the end of this academic year and should be treated that way by parents, teachers and students alike. Not only do they give students a good idea of what it will be like to take their GCSE exams, in a real exam setting, but it also gives the school a good idea about whether students are on target to achieve their predicted grades and where additional support may be required.

The school will put provision in place for students whose results suggest they might need it, but we expect all students to show high levels of motivation to achieve their best results possible. We would like students to use the results from these exams as a year 11 mid-term goal, and for all students to use this as another starting point to gauge their progress.

Thank you for your continued support at what can be a challenging time for some of our students.



Miss Donna Roughton
Assistant Headteacher

