

Supporting your child at home (the senior phase);

Please see below regarding how best to support your child at home.

**Section 1 - Supporting study**

**Section 2 – Information on exams for Parents/Carers**

**Section 3 – Managing stress before and during the exam diet**

**Section 4 – Learning at home**

Section 1

### **Supporting study**

#### **Preparing for exams**

It is important that children and young people are supported at home and school to prepare them well for internal assessments in school and external exams.

The type of support required may depend upon the course assessment. Assessments may be carried out using one or two of the following methods:

assignment

case study

practical activity

performance

portfolio

project / research investigation

question paper/test

Regular attendance throughout the year will help to ensure that your child or young person keeps up with course work and homework. If they do fall behind, through illness perhaps, you should speak to the school about any support which can help them catch up.

Talking to your child or young person to reassure and encourage them and taking an appropriate level of interest in what they are doing will help them get through what can be a stressful time and will help them to do their best.

#### **Managing their time**

The number of competing priorities on a child or young person's time often makes it difficult for them to decide where to start and what to do next.

Preparing for assessments and exams is often something that some children or young people only begin to think about in the last few weeks (and sometimes only days) before the event.

Encourage your child or young person to start revising in good time to avoid cramming and panic.

Help your child or young person to plan a realistic timetable of study for each subject. Their school may have given them a revision planner which can be used / adapted to plan their own time. Subject teachers will give students information on when internal assessments will take place.

#### **Getting organised**

Talk to your child or young person and help them decide on a fixed area at home where they can study with the least amount of distractions. Make sure that they have everything they need eg pens, pencils, paper, notebooks.

Ensure that snacks and water are available to prevent any unnecessary distractions and make sure the study area is comfortable and well lit.

Speak to other members of the family, particularly younger children, about respecting this study area and as far as possible ask them to try to avoid interrupting.

If it is difficult to study at home perhaps your child or young person could make use of the local library or ask your school if they can help.

Encourage your child or young person to get their notes in order for each subject before starting. Having notes organised into topic areas for each subject may be helpful.

Check the dates of each exam and keep a record of them somewhere you can see them easily.

Schools will provide pupils with an exam timetable detailing the subjects being presented. You can access the full [exam timetable](#) on the SQA website. Pupils can also use the SQA [Personal Timetable Builder](#) facility to create their own timetable.

Remember: Sometimes an exam is on a public holiday. The exam will definitely take place on that day and there will be no opportunity to sit it on another day. Schools and colleges are allowed to change the start times of exams slightly, so you should double-check the times of examinations with your child or young person's school / college. Courses will typically also have a second assessment element e.g. an assignment or a practical activity, depending on the subject being studied (or some courses may not have an exam element at all). These additional assessments may not take place during the official SQA timetable period. Your child or young person's school will be able to give you more details on what this involves and the timing of any assessment.

### **Tips to encourage studying**

Exam times can be stressful so encourage your child or young person to take breaks. Hour long revision sessions with short regular breaks of 10 minutes can be effective for children and young people.

They may prefer to complete each task and then build in a break rather than stick to definite time slots. It is the quality of studying which is important.

Some children or young people can focus better in the morning while others prefer the afternoon or early evening. Encouraging them to study at their preferred time may be more beneficial.

Ask your child or young person how you can best support them with studying. They may find it useful for you to read through revision notes with them. Alternatively, asking them what they have learned in their revision may be helpful.

### **Keeping well**

Encourage your child or young person to get plenty of sleep. This is particularly important the night before an exam as it can help them perform better.

Encourage your child or young person to eat well. On the morning of an exam encourage them to have a healthy breakfast, or lunch if the exam is in the afternoon.

Help your child or young person to avoid any unnecessary anxiety or panic by making sure they are in plenty of time for each exam and have everything they need for it eg pens, pencils.

Encourage exercise.

### **Useful websites**

#### **Revision guides**

[Study guides: SQA Study Guides](#) are designed to help children and young people prepare for their exams no matter what subject they are studying.

[BBC Bitesize](#): Revision guide: Resources and information to support school work and homework.

[Pointers for Parents and Pupils - Supporting Learning and Revision](#) - Revision tips and essential information from the National Parent Forum of Scotland.

#### **Past papers and marking instructions**

[Past question papers](#): Download SQA National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher past papers and marking instructions.

#### **Exam dates**

[SQA Examination Timetable](#) and [Personal Timetable Builder](#): The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) NQ Examination Timetable with information on the online and mobile personal timetable builders.

#### **Additional support needs/disabilities**

Children or young people who have additional support needs or a disability can get assessment support when they are studying for SQA qualifications. Parents and carers should contact their child's school to discuss the different types of support available.

#### **'Nationals in a Nutshell' guides**

[National 4 in a Nutshell](#) - A series of summaries of the National 4 qualifications from the National Parent Forum of Scotland for parents and carers.

[National 5 in a Nutshell](#) - A series of summaries of the National 5 qualifications from the National Parent Forum of Scotland for parents and carers.

[Highers in a Nutshell](#) – Written for parents and carer, these are clear concise guides to the new Highers.

#### **Related links**

[SQA support for parents](#) - Information to help you support your child or young person if they are studying for National Qualifications exams.

[Support for pupils](#) who are worried about exams on the Reach website.

## **Section 2 – Information on exams for Parents/Carers**

### **Studying for exams**

If your child is sitting exams as part of their National 5, Higher or Advanced Higher Courses, they may find the following resources useful when revising:

[Specimen Question Papers](#)

[Exemplar question papers](#)

[Past Papers](#)

Specimen and Exemplar Question Papers are available from the Assessment Support section of the relevant [subject pages](#). Simply select your chosen subject from the menu, then select the level.

### **Preparing for coursework**

Our subject pages contain Coursework information, for Courses that include coursework as part of the final Course assessment. These documents give an overview of the task(s) your child will be asked to complete. Our [Your Coursework page](#) also contains information on the rules your child needs to follow when submitting their coursework.

### **Other useful resources from SQA**

If your child is sitting exams, they may find our [timetable and exam apps](#) web page useful. Here, they can access our 'Your Exams' guides, and create their own personal exam timetable and study plan using our handy apps.

Your child can also register for [MySQA](#) and receive their results by text on Results Day.

### **Changes to assessment in National Courses**

In September 2016, Scotland's Deputy First Minister announced that units and unit assessments would be removed from National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses – to reduce the volume of assessment for candidates and to ease the workload of teachers and lecturers.

Units are being removed from these courses on a phased basis, over three years:

National 5 from session 2017-18

Higher from session 2018-19

Advanced Higher from session 2019-20

From these dates onwards, candidates will be assessed through course assessments only.

Visit our [NQ changes](#) page for more information.

Internal Resources

[About SQA](#)

[Exam timetable and apps](#)

[Past Papers](#)

[Qualifications A-Z](#)

[Request for Return of External Assessment Material](#)

[Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework](#)

[Scottish Qualifications Certificate](#)

[Study Guides](#)

[Results Services](#)

External resources

[Parentzone Scotland](#)

[National Parent Forum of Scotland \(NPFS\)](#)

[Exam results, what next?](#)

[My World of Work for Parents](#)

<https://www.npfs.org.uk/>

## **NATIONALS IN A NUTSHELL**

This resource contains free subject guides for all levels and a quick guide to the Senior Phase National Qualifications.

### **Section 3 - Managing stress before and during the exam diet**

<https://www.parentingacrossscotland.org/>

This website offers lots of advice about parenting, including a list of helplines and advice on a range of topics about teenagers (and other ages). There is also a particular focus on assisting teenagers through the exam diet.

<https://www.thespark.org.uk/tips-for-parents-during-exams/>

Exam time can be as stressful for parents as it is for students. The normal teenage angst that leads to tension in the household cranks up a few notches during exam preparation. Indeed many parents will recall attempts to 'help' their stressed-out teen that are interpreted as an act of war worthy of **Michael Howard**.

As we enter exam time for high school, college and university students, The Spark has pulled together our tips for parents during exams.

#### **Tips for parents during exams**

##### **1. Don't sweat the small stuff**

Consider the build-up to and during exams as an amnesty on issues that would typically cause some friction. Bedrooms might be messier than usual. Chores might be forgotten. But all of that is ok. It is easy for parents during exams to revert back to the normal habit of badgering their teenager in to action. By easing off on the usual household duties you will however be giving your child more time and space to focus on exam revision. Once exams are out of the way the temporary suspension can lift and son or daughter can do a bit of catching up. After all, they will have the whole summer holidays to make up for it!

## **2. Talk about exam nerves and realistic expectations**

Though it might seem akin to poking a caged tiger, gently encourage your daughter or son to talk, when ready, about exam nerves. How are they feeling? What pressure are they putting on themselves to deliver certain results? Emphasise that such feelings are completely normal and to be expected. Remind them of their hard work to date to build confidence and suggest they have a look at our [exam stress tips for students](#).

## **3. Help make time for exercise during exam preparation**

Parents during exams want their kids to do as well as they can. By definition that entails a commitment to revision, past papers and the like. A regime of eat-sleep-study-repeat is however counter-productive.

Physical exercise releases endorphins – the body’s natural mood lifter. This helps to clear their mind and take them out of the exam pressure cooker. Parents can play a vital role in encouraging and making exercise possible. For example by offering to take them to and from a sports venue or paying for them to take a night off studying to hit the gym. Help them put together a study schedule that includes regular breaks for exercise and encourage them to maintain attendance at sporting clubs or groups.

Find out more on [ways for teens to exercise](#).

## **4. You get out what you put in**

Along with exercise to help keep your child out of an eat-sleep-study-repeat cycle, play your part in terms of maintaining a good diet and chill out time. Focused time revising for exams is important but a cycle of study with few breaks and surviving on a diet of ‘at the desk’ snack food and energy drinks will compromise their health and exam preparations.

Check out this guide to [healthy eating for teens](#).

## **5. What are you expecting from them during their exams?**

Parents naturally want their children to do well in exams through school and further education. That is completely natural. Most kids place enough pressure upon themselves during study and exam preparation to make that outcome a reality. Additional expectations, demands or pressure from mum and dad can end up being more damaging than useful.

The application of additional pressure by mum and dad may be explicit, like telling them you want them to achieve certain grades. Or it can be more implicit, like how you talk about your expectations for exam success in front of their friends/parents of their friends.

Reassure them of your love and support no matter what the outcome of exams and emphasise that this is not the be all and end all for them. Why not encourage them to read our article [‘Do exam results define your future?’](#)

## **Section 4 - Learning at home**

<https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/learning-at-home/what-can-i-do-as-a-parent/General%20tips%20for%20supporting%20learning%20at%20home>

Parents have a vital role in a child’s learning and development throughout their lives. They provide the cornerstones that allow their child to grow and develop through everyday stimulating activities.

'Learning at home' is the learning which happens in the home, outdoors or in the community. It can take place through everyday activities that families already do and can overlap with aspects of active learning undertaken with parents, family members or peers. *Scottish Parental Involvement Officers Network, 2018*

Learning at home can happen through a range of events including leisure activities, fun events, sports, trips, cultural or volunteering experiences. It can also happen through curriculum related activities, homework, reading and sharing books. Parents and families can also engage in these activities at home as part of everyday routine activities.

### **General tips for learning at home**

Listen, talk, and encourage – this can have a big influence on children's learning

Encourage your child to talk to you about their learning, what learning is happening at school and do what you can at home to build on that.

Talk to your child about their strengths and interests and how they are progressing.

Encourage your child to talk to you about their next steps in learning and find out how you can work with the school to support this

Ask for help if you think your child needs it for any reason.

Praise your child if he/she is working hard at something or has achieved something within or out of school.

Encourage any reading.

Encourage your child to take part in activities, for example hobbies or clubs which will provide opportunities to develop a range of skills.

Help them work on tasks on their own and then talk about it with you afterwards.

Do things together where appropriate – learn together, for example if your child has a project or task to do, take an interest and discuss with them what they are doing or offer support if this is needed.