



Ark Charter  
Academy

# **Parents/Carers GCSE Support Guide**

Designed to help you support your child through their GCSE exams.

# WHAT CAN MAKE THE DIFFERENCE?

## *Helping your child prepare for their GCSE exams*

### **Advice for Parents and Guardians**

Parental support is **8 times more important** in determining a child's academic success than social class. The Campaign for Learning found that parental involvement in a child's education can mean the difference between an A\* and an 'also-ran'.

The good news is that you don't need to be an expert in any of the subjects your child chooses to make a real difference. You also don't need to give up your life and other responsibilities – you just need to know how best to spend the time you do have.

One of the hardest demands on students is that of understanding the long-term importance of doing the best they can, and learning to shelve short-term fun at times in the interest of long-term benefits (not easy even for adults). Children will also differ in their levels of maturity, their ability to take responsibility for their learning, organisational skills and levels of motivation.

**This is where parents come in.** Your support, encouragement and interest can make a spectacular difference to your child's motivation and ability to cope with the academic and organisational demands of the exam period.

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#### **Exam Timetable**

The majority of the GCSE exams take place between 5<sup>th</sup> May and 21<sup>st</sup> June 2017.

There are no exams during the week of the bank holiday 29<sup>th</sup> May – 2<sup>nd</sup> June when schools are normally on half term break. Taking a little time off over the bank holiday is a good idea but your son/daughter will need to do quite a bit of revision in that week.

Please make sure they have plenty of time for it and that you have not planned to be on holiday the full week. There may also be some timetabled revision sessions in school this week.

Students who do their best in GCSE exams work hard all through the year rather than relying on last minute revision.

#### **What you can do to help**

You can help by:

- Recognising how important these exams are and how much time your son/daughter will need if they are to do as well as they can.
- Supporting with any after school, weekend, half-term and holiday time intervention classes your child may need to attend by not booking appointments, (dentist, opticians, visits, days out etc.) when your child needs to be in school doing additional GCSE preparation work.
- Not asking them to do too many chores or look after younger brothers and sisters.
- Encouraging the rest of the family to help by not disturbing revision.
- Ensuring your child has a quiet place for study at home, where their work can be safely kept.
- Encouraging relaxation time (too much study is not helpful).
- Praising hard work.
- Emphasizing the need for plenty of sleep.
- Helping them to forget about each exam as it is finished.

**Reminding them that it will soon be over!**

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Make sure your son/daughter checks that they have all the notes and texts they need for revision. Make sure he or she talks to the subject teacher if any are missing.

Check they have made a revision timetable which includes the dates and times of the examinations in May and June. Also include any other important dates (such as birthdays) when you would want them to take some time off from revision. All coursework and controlled assessments should be finished by the end of April. Before this date your son or daughter will need to split time for revision and written work. However, after this your child will be able to focus on revision and put the written work behind him/her.

The timetable should be used to plan revision sessions. These should be spread out evenly so that your son/daughter is not planning to do too much all at once. Having the timetable displayed in their room is a good idea which helps them stick to the plan.

Check how they are doing by letting them explain something they have just learned. It's a good rule of thumb that if you can follow their explanation then they will be able to produce a good answer to an exam question on that topic.

Encourage your son/daughter to ask for help at school on any parts of their work they do not understand. Encourage your son/daughter to persevere and to work hard in the run-up to the exams.

### **Useful revision tips**

You can support your son/daughter by helping them to follow these tips:

- Plan for half-hour sessions or an hour at most. Any longer and it is likely that nothing more will sink in.
- Take a short break in between sessions and have a glass of water or something similar to drink.
- In the evenings after school, plan to revise one or two subjects only. Leave some time for relaxation.
- Plan to revise specific topics in each subject, not everything at once.
- Ensure that each session starts by tackling the most difficult bits.
- Plan to cover each subject several times and revisit each one near to the exams.

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- Revising with the TV or radio on or with loud music is not a good idea. Having their favourite music in the background may help.
- Reading is not generally enough. Making brief notes in either words or pictures helps them to remember.
- Have all the books they need to hand so they don't have to go off looking for information.
- Working with a friend can be useful because it allows them to test each other and to talk about the work.

### **During the exam period**

Try to ensure that:

- Your son/daughter gets a good night's sleep before exams.
- They have all the equipment they need:
  - A couple of pens and sharp pencils;
  - A rubber and ruler;
  - A watch.

Sometimes they may also need:

- A calculator;
- A protractor.
- They know the start times of every exam that day.
- You wish them well; tell them they have worked hard enough and that they can only do their best.
- You look forward to seeing them at the end of the day.

### **And when it's all over**

Tell your son/daughter to relax and forget about studying for a while. Perhaps you can celebrate by cooking them their favourite meal.

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### **Revision guides**

A number of revision guides are available to purchase in shops or online. Students should ask their subject teachers for advice on which revision guides are suitable for their course.