

## Getting started:

Getting started with revision can be the hardest part. To support your young person, you may wish to start with the following;

- Offer to sit with them while they plan; sometimes just having someone nearby makes the task feel less daunting.
- Use simple prompts, like: 'What's one subject you could start with today?' or 'What's something small you could review in 15 minutes?'
- Celebrate completion of small steps; ticking off one topic or doing 20 minutes is worth acknowledging.
- Revision timetables are key! Begin by helping your young person make a realistic revision plan. Break subjects into chunks and include breaks.
- Complete a 'knowledge audit' and help them identify what they already know - this builds confidence before tackling harder topics. This could be as simple as RAG rating subjects or topics (assigning Red to areas that are tricky, Green to those topics that they are confident in, and Amber for those where a little more revision may be useful).
- Set up a dedicated, calm study space that feels manageable and distraction-free.

## When they're over:

'Emotional fallout' can occur after the exams. This is when the pressure of the exams is finally released and the students suddenly realise that the one thing that they had been focusing on for so long is now over. This is something that mainly affects Year 11 students, but it can still be felt with other year groups as well. Some strategies for how to tackle this can be seen below;

- Recognise that children may feel flat, lost, or emotional after exams end - it's a normal release of tension.
- Encourage rest, fun, and reconnection with hobbies or friends.
- Avoid immediately asking 'how did they go?' or 'do you think you passed?'. Let them talk in their own time.
- Reflect together on how they got through it - this builds resilience for future challenges.

Once the exams have been completed, encourage downtime, reward effort (not just grades), and gently reintroduce routine.

For parents of GCSE students, the following websites may be helpful when navigating GCSE results day;

- Childline: <https://www.childline.org.uk/>
- YoungMinds: <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/>
- Place2Be: Parents' section

# Mental Health Support

## Leaflet 7



Information to support your young person if they are getting stressed about exams or revision

## Revision refusal:

If your young person is refusing to revise it is natural to become frustrated, and sometimes you may be tempted to threaten sanctions at home. Where possible, always try to have a calm approach when addressing this. You may wish to try the following;

- **Curiosity over control:** 'Is there something about revision that's making you feel stuck?'
- **Problem-solving together:** 'Would it help if we worked out a revision plan together?'
- **Offering choice:** Let them pick the subject, location, or method. It boosts ownership.
- **Avoid confrontation:** Start with curiosity. Ask what's feeling difficult or overwhelming about revision.
- **Looking for signs:** Sometimes avoidance is masking fear of failure, perfectionism, or feeling 'too far behind'.
- **Offer support, not pressure:** Ask if they'd prefer to revise with you nearby, or using flashcards or apps.
- **Praise effort, not outcome:** Celebrate the attempt even if it was short or didn't go to plan.

Sometimes refusal isn't laziness, it's anxiety in disguise. Try to notice when their refusal might be linked to burnout or low confidence, rather than defiance.

## Why stress occurs:

Revision stress is a common issue. Even motivated students can struggle with:

- **Fear of failure:** Worrying they'll let people down or ruin their future. Exams can feel like a test of self-worth rather than just academic knowledge.
- **Perfectionism:** Feeling it's never 'good enough', leading to burnout.
- **Comparison:** Believing others are coping better can make them feel behind or inadequate. Peer pressure, high expectations (from self, school, or family), and comparison with others can increase anxiety.
- **Uncertainty:** Not knowing what to expect or how to revise can fuel anxiety.
- **Worry:** Some children may worry about disappointing others or fear failure.
- **Low resilience:** Lack of sleep, poor diet, or pre-existing mental health issues can heighten stress reactions.
- **Pressure:** Pressure can come from within the child, not just outside expectations.

Stress is often a sign that something matters to them. When stress levels rise too high, though, it can block concentration, motivation, and memory. Reassure them that they're not alone and many students feel this way, and there are strategies and support that can help.

## Healthy routines:

When it comes to revision, the following strategies can be the most effective;

- Regular breaks every 30-45 minutes
- Time for friends or hobbies each day
- Healthy snacks and hydration during study
- No phones during revision (if possible)
- Screens off at least 30 mins before bed
- Encourage consistent sleep (ideally 8-10 hours), regular meals, and fresh air daily
- Continue with activities your child enjoys that aren't linked to school - this restores energy and motivation
- Promote screen breaks and avoid revision late at night when the brain is tired
- Gentle physical activity like walking, yoga, or stretching can regulate stress hormones

Routine helps reduce uncertainty and encourages balance. You don't need to supervise every minute; just helping them set up a realistic daily plan can reduce overwhelm. Routines offer a sense of control, which can calm anxiety and improve focus. Encourage them to start small and build up rather than aim for perfection. Let them know it's okay to take breaks without guilt - rest is productive too.