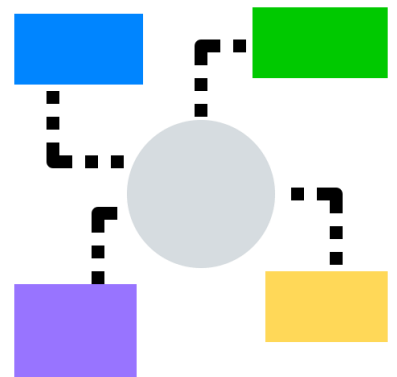
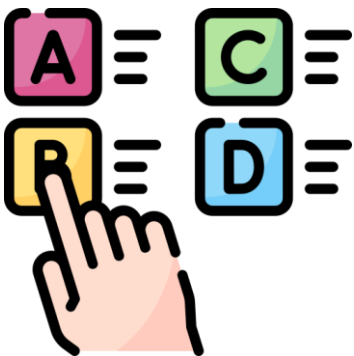


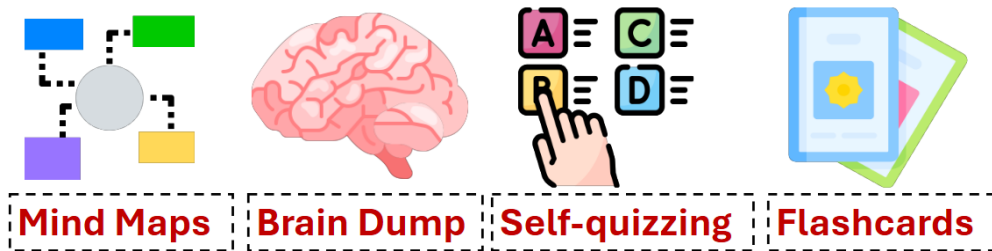


Parent Guide Revision Routines



Small Steps. Big Wins!

What are the Core 4?



At Aston Academy, we use the Core 4 revision strategies to support students' learning and revision. Embedded within Team 27 sessions, these techniques—flashcards, self-quizzing, brain dumps, and mind maps—help students strengthen memory, improve recall, and develop effective independent study habits. These research-informed strategies are designed to support long-term understanding and confidence across all subjects.

- **Flashcards** help students actively test their knowledge by prompting them to recall information, improving retention.
- **Self-Quizzing** involves testing oneself on key material, reinforcing learning and highlighting areas to revisit.
- **Brain Dumps** encourage students to write down everything they know about a topic from memory, helping to organize and strengthen their understanding.
- **Mind Maps** are visual tools that help students break down complex information into structured, memorable summaries.

These strategies will be part of regular learning routines, equipping students with skills for long-term success. Your child has been given a booklet with guidance about how to use these techniques. We appreciate your support in encouraging your child to use the *Core 4* in their studies!

Small Steps. Big Wins!

Helping you to help your child

At Aston Academy, we are committed to supporting every child throughout their GCSE journey and helping them achieve their full potential. Through Team 27 sessions, lessons, and tutor times, students are developing effective learning and revision strategies, while parents are also being supported at home.

We understand that Key Stage 4 can be a challenging time for students and families, so we have used the national platform *From The Sidelines* to provide guidance for parents on how young people learn and how to create effective revision habits at home. The strategies introduced to students are informed by the research of John Dunlosky, highlighting the value of evidence-informed techniques such as retrieval practice and self-testing.

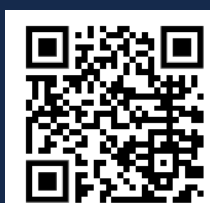
By working together through school and home support, we aim to ensure all students feel confident, supported, and prepared for success throughout Year 10.

This is not about subject knowledge, but instead about creating the right conditions for effective study and revision at home. The platform provides practical tips and strategies that parents can use to support their child outside of the classroom.

Each focus area includes a short one-minute 'study hack' video, offering a quick and practical overview, alongside a longer podcast episode for parents who would like to explore the topic in more depth. There are also summary infographics for each topic, giving parents simple, easy-to-follow steps that can be used to support revision and study routines at home.

Small Steps. Big Wins!

'Helping You To Help Them Through'



Every parent and carer deserves to feel confident in their role to support young people to succeed.

From the Sidelines brings you accessible, engaging and bite-sized study hacks to accompany you through the school term. From how to best use study spaces to the best snacks to fuel your child's brain (and much more!), we deliver research-backed information without the complicated jargon, so we can help you to help them through.

Tune in for study hack bites every fortnight with:



Study hack videos:

One-minute explainer videos on study hacks.



Podcast episodes:

Full episodes in conversation with Jon and Ross, all under 15 minutes.



Infographics:

Convenient graphical explainers to summarise our hacks.

Key topics include:

- The importance of hydration and concentration
- Producing a study planner
- Creating a designated study space
- Managing distractions
- Supporting retrieval practice
- How to habit stack
- Preparing for the night before an exam



Creating a revision timetable



TOPIC: STUDY PLANNER

In the majority of cases, the more organised and disciplined students are, usually means that they perform better at school than their peers. Let's look at how creating a 'study planner' can help with this...



Posting a study planner on the fridge or somewhere in the house that everyone can see, is a great way for everyone in the house to keep on top of when the agreed study periods are taking place.



Tip



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Where should my child revise?



TOPIC: DESIGNATED STUDY SPACE

Having a designated study space in your house for your children to do their work away from school is really important. Let's look at what it requires in order to be as effective as possible...



1 Not a place associated with relaxing

If your child studies on their bed, or on the sofa, it is very difficult for their brain to get into a working mindset, because that place is normally associated with relaxing.



3 Quiet and without distractions

The study space needs to be somewhere that is quiet and that your child will not be distracted in. If this has to be the kitchen table, then they need to use it when that room is quiet.



5 A chair that lets them sit up straight

Sitting upright in a chair to study, rather than slouching or lying down in bed is so much better not only physically for the body, but also mentally to get them into a work mindset.



2 Flat surface

Your child needs to be able to spread their resources out and write on a flat surface such as a desk or a dining room table.



4 Well lit

The room needs to be well lit from either a window, a ceiling light or an extra table light. If your child has to squint due to poor light, it will give them headaches and result in mental fatigue.



Make sure that any flat surface that your child is going to work on whilst studying, is clear of clutter. Working somewhere that is cluttered is not good for clear thinking. A clear space creates a clear mind.



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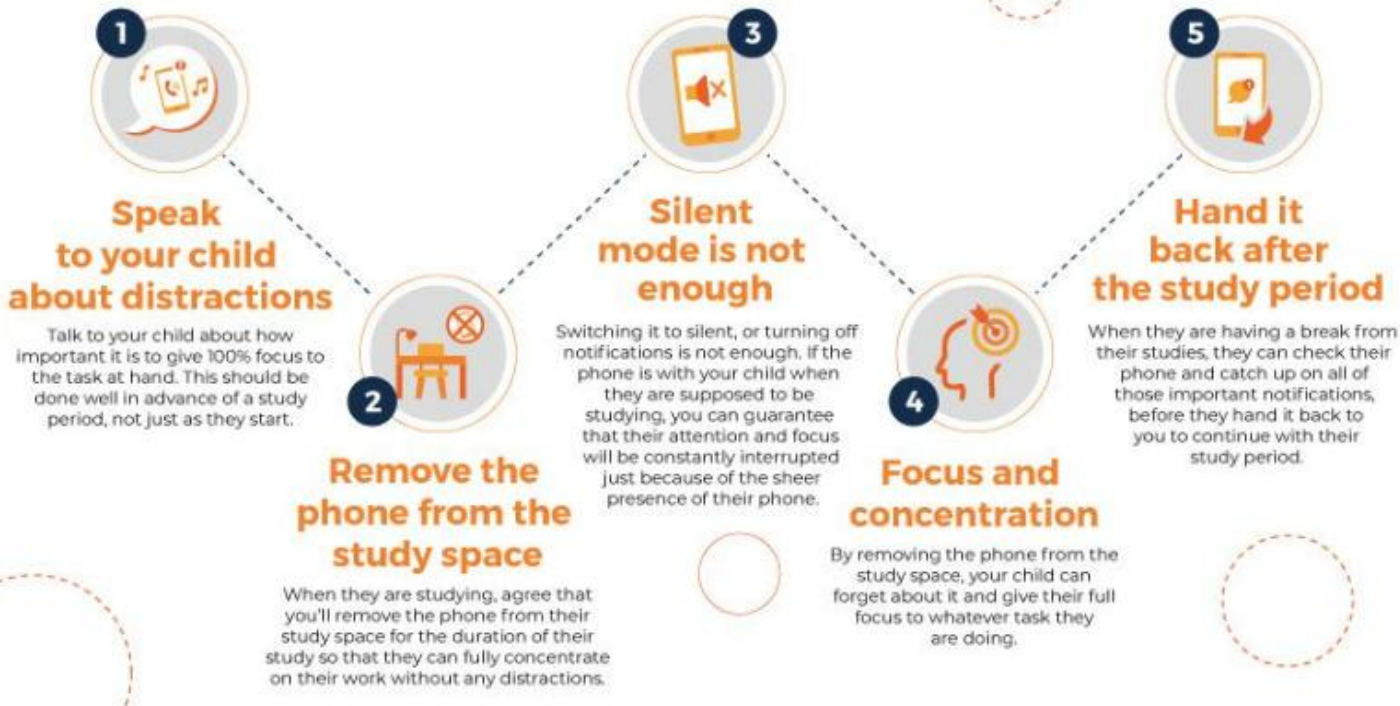
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How can I reduce distractions?



TOPIC: DISTRACTIONS AND MOBILE PHONES

Mobile phones and app notifications are now part of our everyday modern life, but they have become the killer of focus and attention, especially when trying to concentrate or study. Let's look at what we can do as parents to limit these distractions during study periods...



Don't be fooled by thinking your child needs their mobile phone as a calculator (all that will happen is that they will be distracted by the notifications on their phone). Just get them a calculator.



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Can breakfast help on the day of an exam?



TOPIC: THE IMPORTANCE OF BREAKFAST

As parents we need to think carefully about what we fuel our children's bodies with, if we want them to function as effectively as we possibly can when learning and studying. Here's how a good breakfast helps students before exams...



1 Improved concentration and focus

Breakfast provides the brain with the necessary nutrients and energy to function optimally. This helps students stay alert, concentrate better, and focus on their studies during exams.



2 Enhanced memory and cognitive abilities

Nutritious breakfast foods, such as whole grains, fruits, and proteins, contain essential vitamins and minerals that support brain health. These nutrients play a vital role in memory retention and cognitive function, helping students recall information more effectively during exams.



3 Steady energy levels

A balanced breakfast, with a good mix of carbohydrates, proteins, and healthy fats provides a steady supply of energy throughout the morning. This helps prevent energy crashes and keeps students mentally and physically energised during their exams, ensuring they can sustain their performance.



4 Reduced stress and anxiety

Exams can be stressful, and skipping breakfast can exacerbate this stress. Hunger and low blood sugar levels can trigger feelings of irritability and anxiety. A nutritious breakfast can help stabilise blood sugar levels and reduce stress, promoting a calmer and more focused mindset during exams.



5 Better time management

Making time for breakfast sets a positive tone for the day and encourages better time management. Students who start their day with breakfast are more likely to follow a routine, which can help them allocate sufficient study time and avoid the last-minute cramming that comes with skipping meals.

Try to get your child into a routine when it comes to breakfast. It's very easy to skip breakfast if you don't know what to eat, or you're not used to sitting down every day to have breakfast. A routine makes it happen.



Why is hydration important?



TOPIC: HYDRATION

It's not a secret that we need to keep our body well hydrated if we want to be able to perform at the best of our abilities in whatever life has to throw at us every day. This is even more important for our children when they need to concentrate, think and focus on their learning. Let's look at why this is...



Maintaining optimal brain function

When your child is dehydrated, their brain can become fatigued, leading to difficulties in concentration, memory retention, and problem-solving.



Enhanced focus and attention

By keeping your child well-hydrated, you provide them with the edge needed to stay focused and engaged during their study sessions.



Improved memory retention

Dehydration can hinder your child's ability to absorb and retain new information. Being hydrated allows effective information processing and storage, making it easier for your child to recall vital facts during exams.



Balanced mood and reduced stress

Dehydration can exacerbate stress and lead to mood swings and anxiety. By ensuring your child drinks enough water, you help them maintain a more balanced mood, reducing the impact of stress and allowing them to approach their studies with a positive mindset.



Promoting healthy habits

Hydration is not just important during academic endeavours. By teaching your child the importance of drinking water regularly, you help them establish a foundation for a healthier lifestyle.

If your child suddenly starts drinking more water around exam time, then their body won't be used to this, meaning they will need to go to the toilet more often. This needs to be built up over time, so that their body gets used to it.



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Small Steps. Big Wins!

What if my child feels stressed?



TOPIC: STRESS CAN BE GOOD

At various points throughout the year, you may often see your child grappling with stress and anxiety. While it's natural for us as parents to want our children to be calm and relaxed during their learning, it's important to understand that some signs of stress can actually be beneficial...



1 Increased blood flow

When children feel stressed, their heart rate increases, pumping more blood and oxygen to their brains and muscles. This heightened blood flow can enhance cognitive functions, sharpen focus, and improve memory recall.



2 Improved breathing patterns

Stress triggers changes in breathing patterns, such as faster and shallower breaths. While this might seem disconcerting, it actually helps deliver more oxygen to the brain and muscles, improving overall performance.



3 Heightened awareness

Exam stress often induces a state of heightened awareness and vigilance. This can make children more alert to details and less likely to make careless mistakes, whilst also helping them pay attention to time management.



4 Increased sweating

Sweating is a natural bodily response to stress, designed to help regulate body temperature during challenging situations. While excessive sweating may be uncomfortable, it indicates that your child's body is adapting to the pressure and working to maintain equilibrium.



5 Enhanced motivation

Moderate levels of stress can serve as a powerful motivator for children to perform at their best. When faced with the pressure of exams, students may become more determined to succeed, leading them to study more diligently and prepare thoroughly.

YOUNGMINDS

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Small Steps. Big Wins!