



Heathfield

Community College and Sixth Form

Making the most of Key Stage 4

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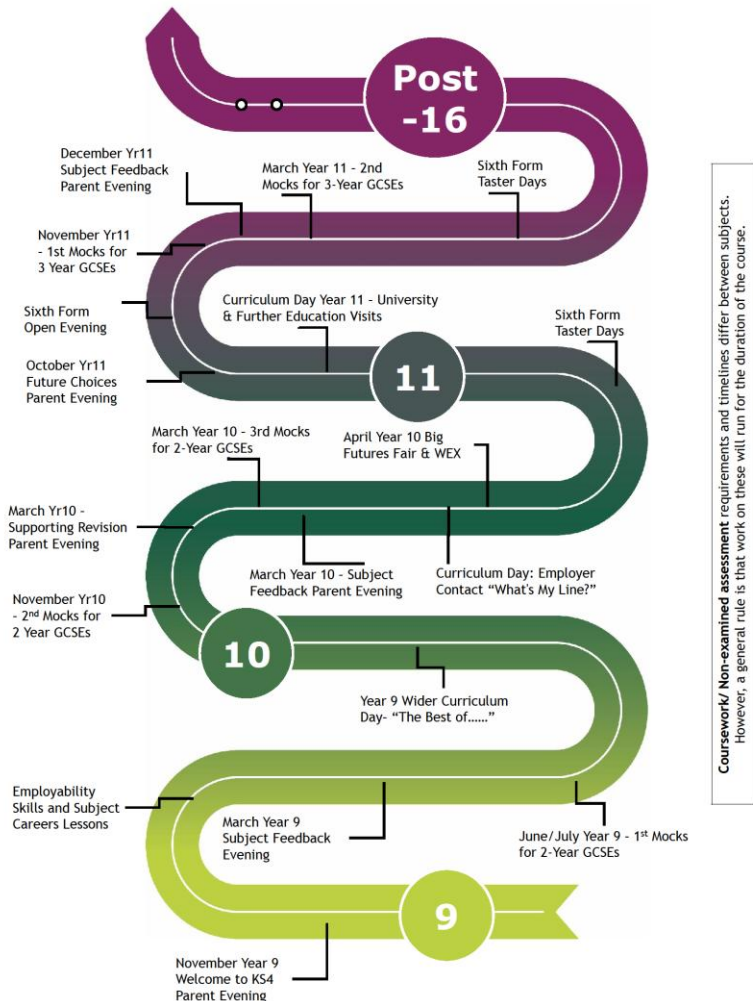
Key Stage 4

- The Structure of Key stage 4
- Attendance as a controllable factor
- Top Tips for Independent Learning & Revision at home
- Navigating The Teenage Years

Key Stage 4 at Heathfield



The Key Stage 4 Journey



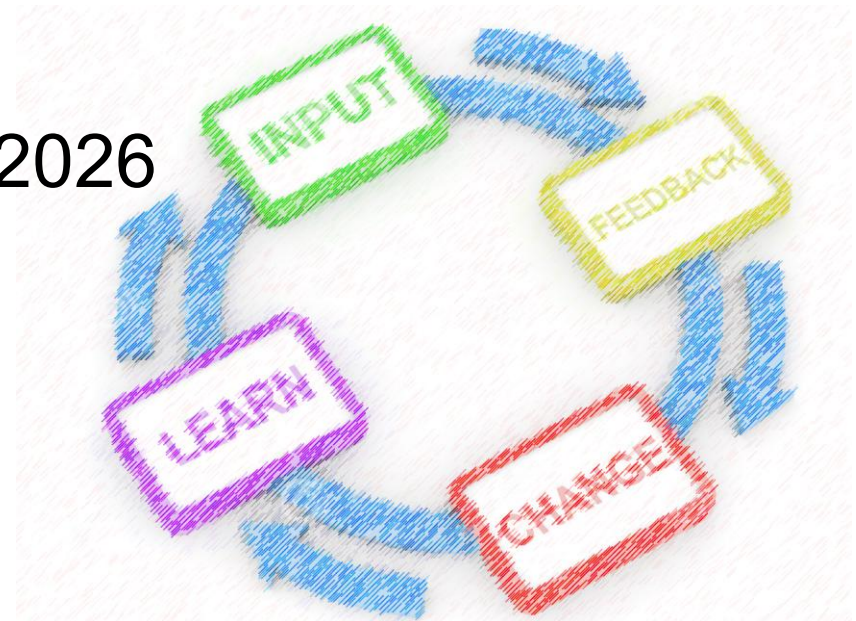
Staged Approach to:

- Mocks & GCSEs
- Careers & Post-16 choices
- Age appropriate Personal Development
- Wider education: academic & cultural
- Well-being

The Structure of Key Stage 4

A Staged approach to Mocks & GCSEs

- 2 GCSEs in Year 10 spreads the workload, supports well-being and keeps a broad curriculum.
- The journey to examination is phased and based on continual feedback
- Mock exams in Summer 2026
2-year courses



GCSE grading

Old grades	New grades
A*	9
A	8
B	7
C	6
	5 STRONG PASS
D	4 STANDARD PASS
	3
E	2
F	1
G	1
U	U

BTEC grading

Level / Qualification Grade	Grade Equivalent
Level 2 / Distinction*	8.5
Level 2 / Distinction	7
Level 2 / Merit	5.5
Level 2 / Pass	4
Level 1 / Distinction	3
Level 1 / Merit	2
Level 1 / Pass	1.25

The Structure of Key Stage 4

Careers & Post-16 choices:

- Employability skills
- Careers Lessons in Subjects
- Alumni contact
- Wider Curriculum Days
- Work experience option in Y10
- Careers Library and Careers Adviser
- Information Evenings
- Careers Interviews available for all

The Structure of Key Stage 4

Within the Curriculum: age appropriate PD and well-being

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
Year 9	<p>Ground Rules: negotiated by the class for the year</p> <p>CEIAG: My Future and how I'll realise it</p> <p>DATE (Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco Education) (2019 trial with Sussex Police and the PSHE association on role of the police in lessons)</p>	<p>DATE (Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco Education) Normative data, baseline assessments on what they already know</p> <p>Anti-Bullying Week: sexting: definition, the law and ways to negotiate</p>	<p>DATE: Alcohol/ Illegal substances (including the Law, County Lines, managing individual risk)</p>	<p>DATE/ RSHE: Debate on legalisation of drugs.</p> <p>RSHE: Normative data</p> <p>Risk management, mindfulness, self-esteem and resilience</p>	<p>RSHE: Positive Relationships, risk management, contraception</p>	<p>RSHE: Contraception, sexualised and gendered language</p> <p>SMSC</p>
Year 10	<p>Ground Rules: negotiated by the class for the year</p> <p>KS4 citizenship</p> <p>RSHE: The family & adoption/ STIs/ Abortion KS4</p> <p>Citizenship</p>	<p>RSHE: sexuality and homophobia</p> <p>Anti-Bullying Week: grooming: the law and sexual consent and exploitation</p>	<p>Homelessness and housing: YMCA session</p> <p>Independent living</p> <p>2019 #knowknives sessions funded by East Sussex</p> <p>KS4 citizenship FBV</p>	<p>CEIAG: pre and post Big Futures careers fair preparation lessons</p> <p>KS4 Citizenship</p> <p>Self-esteem/ body image eating disorders</p> <p>SMSC</p>	<p>Mental Illness/ resilience and sources of support</p> <p>SMSC</p>	<p>RSHE: Cancer: what it is, how to manage personal risk</p> <p>The importance of listening and Mental Health and wellbeing and seeking sources of support (Samaritans session)</p>
Year 11	<p>Ground Rules: negotiated by the class for the year</p> <p>KS4 Citizenship</p> <p>Lesson to mark World Mental Health Day SMSC</p> <p>Prejudice topic: disabilism, ageism, racism, homophobia, transphobia, sexism, classism</p> <p>Session led by BUR on Disability Hate Crime</p> <p>KS4 Citizenship</p>	<p>CEIAG: Planning for the future: A Level Talks, apprenticeships presentation, applying to College via Careers East Sussex</p> <p>Anti-Bullying Week: This year's theme or a lesson on consent and grooming #metoo</p>	<p>CEIAG and Prejudice continued from term 1 and 2</p>	<p>RSHE: Transphobia, homophobia, pornography and consent</p>	<p>Mental health, managing stress, exam technique</p>	

The Structure of Key Stage 4

Wider support for young adulthood:

Wider Curriculum Days

World Mental Health Day

The Big Vote and Youth Parliament

Careers Events: Open Door visit, Uni Visits, College visits, WEX

Wellbeing and Resilience strategies in tutor time

Parliament week and visit to London

Safe Driving events

Anti-Bullying Week

National Volunteer Service

Financial Planning guidance

Charity events

Equality Awareness events

Teenage Cancer Trust Talks

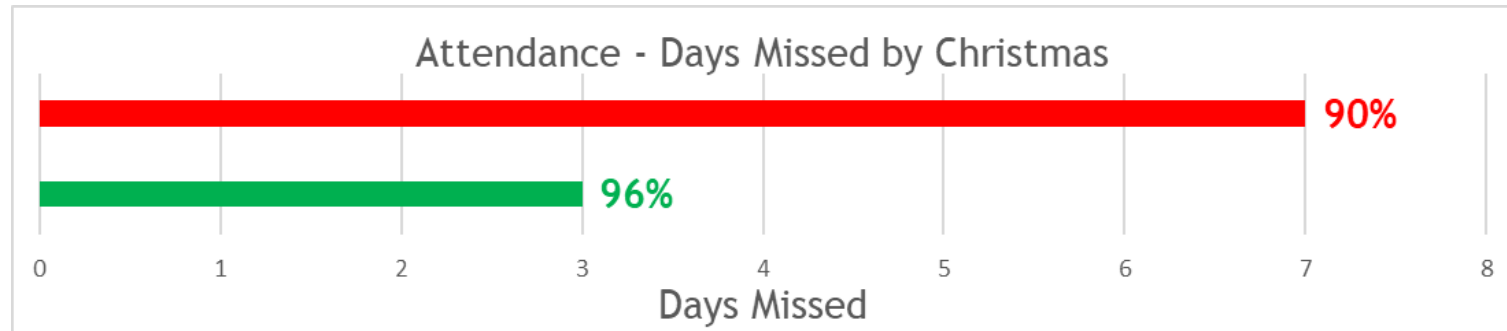
Wider Curriculum offer:

- Clubs
- Supercurricular
- Leadership
- Houses
- DofE
- STEM
- Enrichment Week

Attendance



Attendance is everything



There is a direct impact with school attendance and outcomes for students, national research shows:

- *90-94% leads to up to 2 grades lower across subjects*
- *80% or lower leads to a less than 5% chance of gaining 5 GCSE Grade 5s*

This is reflected at Heathfield and can affect Maths and English which then impacts on students next steps, A Level choices or college courses.

2025 GCSE results	% Grade 4 in English and Maths	% Grade 5 in English and Maths	Average grade
95-100% attendance	83%	71%	5.7
<80% attendance	30%	15%	2.8

Attendance is everything

In a two-year GCSE subject, students will have seven lessons a fortnight in Year 9 (approximately 130 over the year).

If their attendance is 90%, they will potentially have missed 13 lessons in that subject.

By the time they are in Year 11, they have ten lessons a fortnight of their core subjects (around 190 over the year) 90% attendance could mean missing 19 maths lessons that year!

Reading

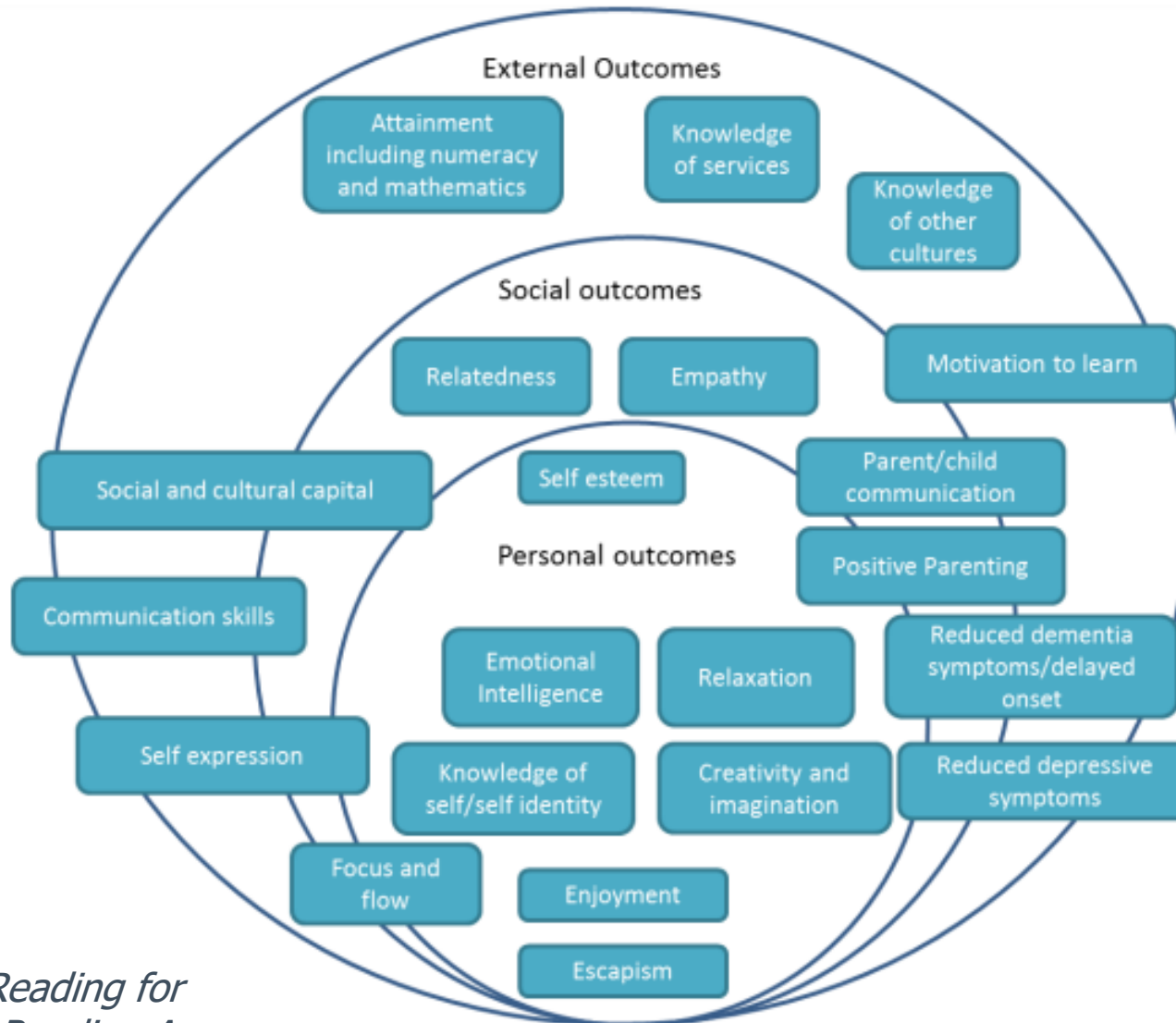


Figure 1: Overall Outcomes Map

Outcomes of Reading for Pleasure, The Reading Agency (2015)

Reading

Reading Recommendations

This section is full of ideas for where to turn next for a book if you and your child aren't sure. We know that different students have different barriers when it comes to selecting a book. The videos below are targeted at different types of readers so that you can see how to support your child depending on the type of reader they are.

Reluctant Readers



Reluctant readers: While some of our students are perfectly able readers, they don't always want to pick up a book. This video gives some ideas about books that even the most book-averse students find it hard to resist.

Struggling Readers



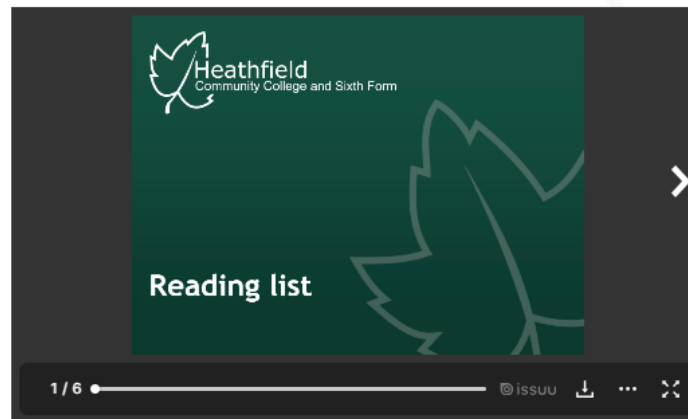
Struggling readers: Some students find reading difficult and this is a barrier to picking up a book. There are lots of books written for those with a low literacy level but with a high interest level. Watch this video to hear about some of these books.

Regular Readers



Regular readers: Even those who read regularly can get stuck with their reading. They can avidly enjoy a book series and then not know where to turn when they've completed the series. This video suggests ideas depending on the genre of book your child enjoys.

There are so many brilliant books to enjoy. The following recommended reading list has been compiled by English teachers at Heathfield Community College but also our English teacher colleagues in two other local secondary schools:



Revision/homework: views do vary

- 6 months research
- >120 research papers and case studies
- Heathfield study >310 families

Homework gets in the way of sport and other activities (4-8hrs)

Although I believe learning is at home as well as school I do not agree with homework every night as it restricts wellbeing time and out of school interests (4-8hrs)

I believe there should be a balance between school work and enjoyment, relaxing, spending time with friends and family. (8-10hrs)

There should be more homework set, I do not think my child gets enough directed study.

Revision/homework: the evidence

1. Completing work at home*, to the required standard makes a difference.
 - Doing less than 8-10hrs a week leads to 1 GCSE grade lower in GCSE outcomes, often in Maths or English.
 - **ACTION:** Completing the work you have been set, to the requirements of your teacher, will be enough to do well.

2. Boys spend less time on homework than girls (survey)
 - 33% of KS4 boys completed 8hrs per week
 - 61% of KS4 girls completed 8hrs per week
 - **ACTION:** Staff will set work with clear guidance on expected timings, this can be checked and praised when completed to a good standard.

Revision/homework: the outcomes

- 2 hours a night by Yr11 leads to 10+ hrs a week
- Most students are doing that (*68-70% on survey feedback*)
- Time for breaks, family and friends is just as important
- Perspective and balance is important

Revision Planner- Year 11 Mocks 2025

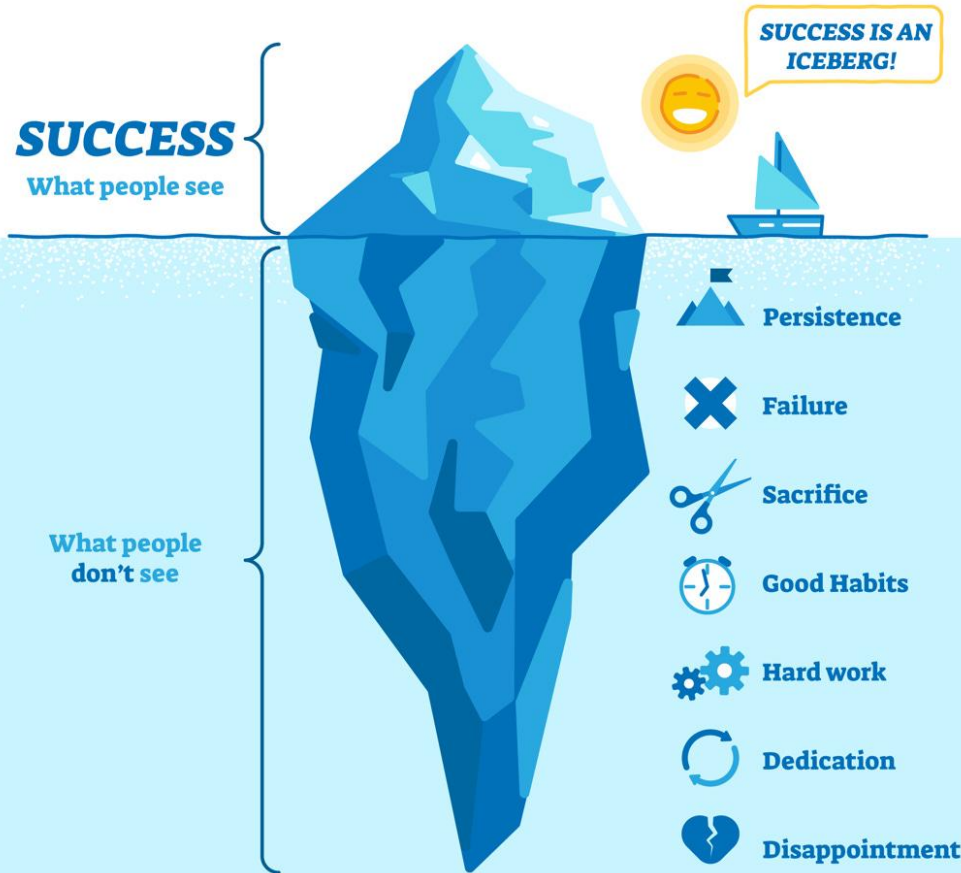


Time	Monday 22/9/25	Tuesday 23/9/25	Wednesday 24/9/25	Thursday 25/9/25	Friday 26/9/25	Time	Saturday 27/9/25	Sunday 28/9/25
8am- 4pm	SCHOOL	SCHOOL	SCHOOL	SCHOOL	SCHOOL	9am-10am	Biology	Football match
4pm-5pm	Free time	Biology	Free time	Free time	Free time	10am-11am	Business	Football match
5pm-6pm	Chemistry	English Language	Geography	Maths	English Language	11am-1pm	Geography Chemistry	Family time
6pm-7pm	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	1pm-3pm	Physics	Family time
7pm-8pm	Maths	Football training	English Lit	English Lit	Free time	3pm-5pm	Meeting friends	Maths
8pm-9pm	Free time	Business Studies	Free time	Free time	Free time	5pm-7pm	Dinner	Dinner

Revision

“But I’m just not very good at remembering stuff!”

THE ICEBERG ILLUSION



There are simple things that make a difference...

Supporting Independent Learning

Simple Strategies at home:

Talking about the work

A space to work with limited distraction (*inc. devices*)

A combination of trust & encouragement

Routines and Study Habits

Revision/homework: parents' evidence

Routines are important, and planning around hobbies, particularly for boys:

- *So he's generally three till five for the gym. And then he'll come home and he'll do his homework after the gym. And that's traded off because generally he'll have sports club in the evening or another thing with friends. So if homework's not done, then he doesn't.*
- *We generally say homework first and screentime second. They're pretty used to that now so it works for them*

Some students would prefer to stay at school and get homework completed, preferring to keep school and home separate

- *He would far rather stay at school and get it done rather than bring it home*
- *She wants to stay at school and get stuff done so it doesn't come home. I don't know if that's because her sister did it with her revision but that's what she said she wants to do.*

Planning routine so siblings are working at the same time

- *They'll work at the table together and I can hear them talking about stuff that goes straight over my head!*
- *To be honest L works best when L or S are around and he sees them working too*

Information & Advice on College Website

- What homework is set, how much & deadlines
- What topics they are studying
- General advice on how to support homework

The screenshot shows the Heathfield website header with the logo and navigation menu. The main content area is titled "Supporting Home Learning" and contains three paragraphs of text. Below the text are four circular icons representing different support services: "Supporting Learning at Home" (a house with a person), "Effective Revision" (a pencil and a circular arrow), "Homework Expectations" (a target with a pencil), and "Digital Support" (a computer monitor with a question mark and exclamation mark).

The screenshot shows the Heathfield website header with the logo and navigation menu. The main content area is titled "The Heathfield Curriculum Maps" and contains a grid of 20 circular icons representing different subjects: Art, Business and Economics, Computing, D & T, Drama, English, Geography, History, Latin, Maths, Media, MFL, Music, PE, Photography, Politics, PRE, PSHE, Psychology, and Science.

Resources to support revision

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Effective Revision

Click here for Subject revision resources across the key stages.

There are a number of important considerations when preparing for revision, whether for an internal or external examination. These include using the right resources and the right strategies.

Without a knowledge and understanding of these, students can often spend time revising that has no impact on long term retention.

We make sure that appropriate revision materials are uploaded onto Google and are clearly identifiable for use by staff, students and parents. These include: checklists, suggested revision materials, examination past paper questions and mark schemes among many others.

As a research-informed school we try to ensure that we utilise every moment to its greatest effect. Revision is no exception to this. There are some clear strategies that work and there are some which whilst reassuring to students actually have very little impact on long term retention of the important knowledge or understanding.

To help students and parents understand these and ensure that time is used effectively in independent study, we have provided some short guides here on the critical strategies we know from research and from our experience, make a difference.

Revision Resources

Please see [here](#) for revision resources across the key stages.

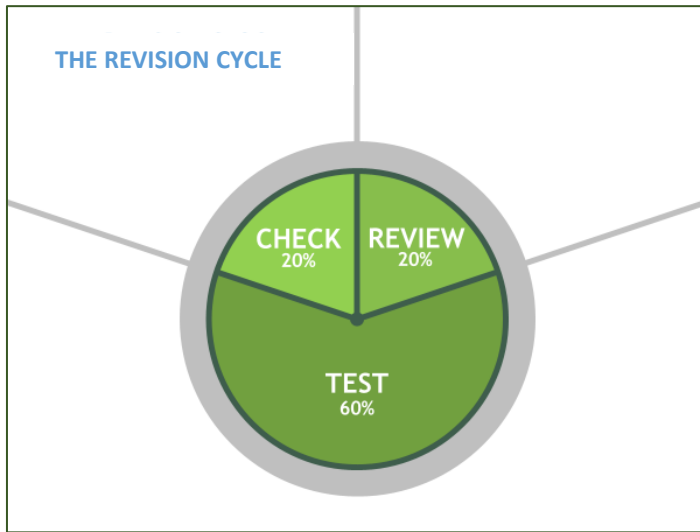
Organising Revision

Every student should put together a comprehensive revision timetable. This will break each subject into bite-size chunks. We recommend creating a free account with "GetRevising" and using their "Study Planner" to organise revision time. A list of all GCSE subjects and the appropriate exam boards can be found [here](#).

- The Heathfield Curriculum
- Curriculum Maps
- GCSE Options
- Digital
- Research Informed Practice
- Effective Revision



Resources to support revision



Students will be actively taught independent study skills, where and how to use them:

1. Using images for text
2. Mnemonics
3. Summary
4. Highlighting
5. Re-reading
6. Self-Explanation
7. Interrogating a topic
8. Interleaving
9. Distributed practice
10. Testing

Managing The Teenage Years



The teenage years in a nutshell

During their teenage years, young people face a huge number of challenges.

Their bodies are changing, and they are going through a massive period of brain and hormonal development.

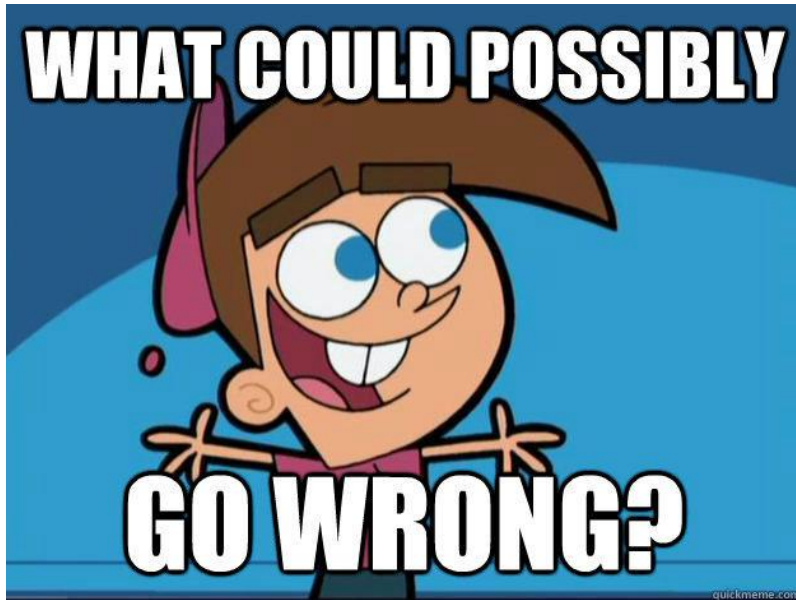
They are growing up and maturing more generally. They are trying to find out who they are, and establish their identity as a separate person from both you and their friends, but heavily influenced by both.

They are also subject to increasing pressure to achieve good results at school, with public exams looming.

It is, perhaps, not surprising that their behaviour may become more challenging, and that they may experience mood swings and emotional ups and downs during this period.

Every Teenager is Different!

Managing The Teenage Years



Managing The Teenage Years

- Look after Yourself...you are their role models
- Keep Talking and Listening: think about wording
- Set and Keep Boundaries.... always show You Love Them!



Knowing your child and therefore being able to spot when something's changed over time or isn't normal.

Managing The Teenage Years



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Symptoms of low mood and depression

As a parent, it can be useful to understand the difference between having a generally low mood and feeling depressed. This can help you to think through what your child is experiencing and the type of support they need.

If your child is experiencing a low mood, they may feel more sad, tearful, worried, tired or angry than usual, or feel low and less confident about themselves – but then feel better after a few days or weeks. They may also start to feel better quite quickly after making small changes in their life or routine – for example after resolving a disagreement with a friend, getting to the end of a stressful time at school or starting a more regular sleeping pattern.

When a young person is depressed, sadness and low feelings do not change or go away with time. These feelings can become overwhelming and stop them from doing or enjoying things they normally would. When a young person is experiencing this, it's very difficult to shift the situation without extra help and support.



While every young person is different, and these feelings are often expressed differently at different ages, some signs that your child may be feeling depressed include:

- withdrawing, or avoiding friends or social situations
- finding it hard to concentrate, and/or losing interest in schoolwork
- not wanting to do things they previously enjoyed
- feeling irritable, angry or frustrated
- feeling tearful, miserable, lonely or hopeless
- feeling empty or numb
- being very self-critical, or feeling less confident
- sleeping more or less than normal
- eating more or less than normal
- feeling tired or not having any energy
- showing less or no interest in self-care activities like washing
- wanting to self-harm
- experiencing suicidal thoughts

If your child is experiencing one or two of these things, it does not necessarily mean that they are experiencing depression. But it's important to speak to your GP as a first step so that you can explore what's going on together.

Getting help for your child >

Symptoms of anxiety

Anxiety tends to affect a young person's body, thoughts and feelings. They may also behave differently, including turning to certain coping behaviours to try to avoid or manage their anxiety.

Physical symptoms:

- panic attacks, which can include having a racing heart, breathing very quickly, sweating or shaking
- shallow or quick breathing, or feeling unable to breathe
- feeling sick
- dry mouth
- sweating more than usual
- tense muscles
- wobbly legs
- irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), diarrhoea or needing to pee more than usual
- getting very hot

Thoughts and feelings:

- preoccupied by upsetting, scary or negative thoughts nervous, on edge, panicky or frightened
- overwhelmed or out of control
- full of dread or an impending sense of doom
- alert to noises, smells or sights
- worrying about being unable to cope with daily things like school, friendships and being in groups or social situations
- worrying so much that it is difficult to concentrate and/or sleep

Coping behaviours:

- withdrawing or isolating themselves – including not wanting to go to school, be in social or group situations, be away from parents or try new things
- repeating certain behaviours, actions or rituals (often called 'obsessive compulsive behaviours')
- eating more or less than usual
- self-harming

Managing The Teenage Years

Health and Wellbeing

In a context of high stakes accountability and often a College Improvement Plan target and long term goals that allow them the best choices for their next stage of education.

Our approaches are outlined here: Heathfield Community College

[Edulink](#)[Firefly](#)[Schoolgateway](#)[Who to Contact](#)[Letters & Information](#)[Parent Feedback & Engagement](#)[Supporting Home Learning](#)[Subject Feedback Evenings](#)[Health and Wellbeing](#)[Personal Development](#)[Careers Programme](#)

Under pressure, Heathfield Community College has a commitment to student wellbeing. It is our aim that students who leave Heathfield are not only equipped with a set of outcomes that allow them the best choices for their next stage of education, but also with the personal, social and emotional skills to be able to thrive.

Our approaches are outlined here: Heathfield Community College's approach to Student Wellbeing and are reviewed each year.



You have a responsibility

If you have a concern about someone

If you have a concern about someone

Keep You Safe

are at College



You have a responsibility
not to harm others.

If you have a concern about someone
at college or at home difficult what can
you do?

Speak to

Speak to

Managing The Teenage Years



Form Tutor
Pastoral Manager
Head of Year



Subject Teacher
Curriculum Leader

Safeguarding & Well-being Lead – Miss Surrage

Managing The Teenage Years





Heathfield

Community College and Sixth Form

Making the most of Key Stage 4

