

## How you can support your son/daughter in their May Exams

Earlier this year we wrote to you to explain how you can support your son or daughter more broadly in their studies here at Esher. This leaflet seeks to remind you about the support we offer and how you can support your son/daughter with their forthcoming exams.

### Why do we hold May exams?

Alongside the support we provide through subject teachers, tutors and student services, we want to provide our students with challenge. Exams are a useful tool to help students and their teachers monitor progress and give feedback on how to improve. The challenge of taking exams will also boost hard work and, accompanied by the support and encouragement we offer, this will help foster resilience. With that in mind, most students will be taking exams at the start of next term. These will take place between the 5<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> May 2022. These exams offer a chance for students to show progress and their potential.

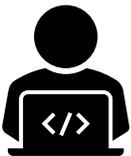
### Here is a reminder of the support we offer to students outside of lessons



Encourage your son/daughter to talk online or face to face to their tutor and teachers who can provide further support, guidance and one to one help. Tutors will be giving advice on how to revise for exams in this week's PDP session.



Encourage the use of the LRC. Students can access hundreds of e-books at home, as well as specialist databases which support independent research (College portal/ Study Support and Careers/LRC). LRC assistants are on hand to help with general enquires and accessing resources. At home, students can contact the LRC for further support and guidance on [LRCRequests@esher.ac.uk](mailto:LRCRequests@esher.ac.uk).



Having a quiet and undisturbed place to study can be invaluable. Whilst students will be working at home more than before the pandemic, there are also quiet places to work at College. Students should aim to remove distractions, for example, by turning off their phone and not listening to music.



Encourage students to take advantage of help available in addition to lessons. Teachers offer a variety of means of support, such as lunchtime drop-ins to work on a practical skill or coursework, twilight revision sessions on Teams, face to face or online tutorials on essay writing or Maths problems, help in a workshop or studio. Students may be asked to attend a specific help session if they need extra support.



Subject Portal and Microsoft Teams sites contain a wealth of information, including lesson presentations, videos, extension tasks, revision resources and past papers. Students will find the information on these sites beneficial in supporting their learning and revision outside of the classroom, so do encourage them to use them.

## Revision for exams

In the last letter we explained that successful students study for 10 hours per subject per week. Around 4½ hours of these are in lessons, leaving around 5½ hours independent study outside of lessons. This independent study is particularly important in the run up to exams. However, it is not just how many hours a student does, but what they do in those hours that counts. That is why we have included a number of Revision Tips. Please do read on for some useful advice that you may wish to discuss with your son or daughter.

Revision Tips
Understanding and prioritising what to do during independent study time is crucial. Teachers will guide students but revising what you already know and understand, instead of the topics they find challenging is an easy trap to fall in to. Encourage your son/daughter to also <b>tackle more difficult topics in their revision</b> . Remember, studying at this level is not intended to be easy!
Encourage your son/daughter to <b>keep a list of questions</b> that arise as they study and then <b>ask their teachers for help with these</b> . This can help them keep track of the concepts they are finding challenging and use 1:1 time with their teachers more effectively. Teachers are here to help.
Most students need a <b>balance of learning information by heart and exam question practice</b> . Students need to <b>be clear about which resources to use for their revision</b> . Their teachers will have spoken to them about this but do encourage your son/daughter to ask their teacher if they have queries. Have they got a well-organised set of notes? Do they know where to find past papers and mark schemes? Have they got the recommended textbooks? (A Revision Guide is no substitute).
<b>Revision needs to be active to be effective</b> . Re-reading or copying out copious notes is not the best way to build long-term memory. Here are some techniques that are proven to be the most effective: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ <b>Retrieval practice</b> This requires students to answer a question. Examples include 'flash cards' with a question on one side and answers on the other, past papers or answering questions out loud. Offering to test your son/daughter may help. Getting them to talk to you about what they have learned could be a good way for them to test what they know and practise expressing ideas.</li><li>✓ <b>Spacing</b> This is learning a little information regularly. The forgetting and re-visiting helps establish it in long-term memory and is much more effective than cramming lots of information at the last minute.</li><li>✓ <b>Interleaving</b> This is revising more than one topic within a subject in one revision session. It helps students make links between topics.</li><li>✓ <b>Study Partner</b> If students choose a hard-working partner to work with it can be a motivating factor and make learning more effective.</li></ul>

## How to manage the pressure of exams

It is natural for students to feel nervous before an exam, but good preparation and routines can help manage these exam nerves. Here are some strategies that may help students:-

- ✓ Getting a good night's sleep the night before an exam will be more beneficial than a late night revision session.
- ✓ Thinking about past successful tests and exams can improve student confidence and self-belief.
- ✓ Eating breakfast helps concentration.
- ✓ Taking deep breaths can help reduce anxiety.

If your son or daughter's exam stress is affecting their health encourage them to ask for help at College, for example, from their tutor, our counsellors or nurse. Students can also access a number of resources and guidance for managing wellbeing and mental health by going to the Health and Wellbeing Support section on the College Portal/Student Life. There are lots of tips and links to organisations where additional support can be found as well as a short course on Anxiety Management.

**What if an exam doesn't go as expected?** Encourage your son or daughter to view this as a learning opportunity rather than a judgement of their ability, for example, teachers will go through the papers and students can learn a lot from this, particularly if they are willing to ask questions and get the help they need.