



St Ignatius College – Year 11

How to support your child's learning in Year 11 – practical strategies and advice for parents

Teachers often have conversations with families about how they can best support their child's education. We also have conversations with students who can feel that they are either facing too much pressure to study 24/7 or that they don't have the right environment in which to study when not in school. What follows are some practical strategies and advice for families and students on how to best support sixth form study.

1. Around the house

- ✓ Display the student's timetable and their revision timetable when key exams are approaching.
- ✓ Display information about exam boards (and know how many exam units; how many exams per subject; important deadlines).
- ✓ Create a 'silent study' area in the house (free from distractions and siblings) to enable focussed study.
- ✓ Display study revision materials, such as key dates, mind-maps, quotes, formulas in often used areas (e.g. the back of the bedroom door).

2. Gadgets, technology, social media

- ✓ Keep bedrooms a technical / gadget free zone – insist on laptops / TVs in public areas of the home only.
- ✓ Limit time on mobile phones, smartphones, ipads, computer games, access to social networking sites, time spent on laptops (these should be kept to social areas in the house rather than in a student's bedrooms).
- ✓ Have a time every evening when mobile phones are handed in or turned off.
- ✓ Today's tasks for Wi-fi code (we have heard of a parent who changes the wi-fi code daily and their child has to complete study and house chores daily before they are given the code).

3. Discussions

- ✓ Constructively discuss termly reports.
- ✓ Actively seek opportunities for positive reinforcement and positive communication. E.g.:
Avoid asking: 'How was school today?'
Use instead: 'Tell me three things you learned today that you didn't know yesterday.'
(always push for specifics, e.g. if the response is 'nothing!', go through each lesson)
Ask: 'What are your next steps?' 'How can you improve upon work you have done today / a recent assessment?' 'Please explain to me something you have learned today.' (This can help students consolidate, summarise and self-assess their learning).
- ✓ Discuss a topical news story together (from good quality print such as broadsheet newspapers) and broadcast (Channel 4 news, BBC) – ask for opinions (play devil's advocate and challenge the student's opinion).
- ✓ Link subjects and learning to real life: climate change, Brexit; Discuss the skills you had to use and develop when fulfilling responsibilities of your day, be that at work or at home: discuss what you learned and what your next steps will be (modelling the need for continued personal and professional reflection).
- ✓ Have a family book club: read the same book; have a competition to see who finishes first; discuss interpretations of the book.
- ✓ Find opportunities to praise success! Study patterns and effective study behaviours.

4. Establish daily routines

Every weekday morning:

- ✓ Ensure your son gets up at the same time every morning to establish routines.
- ✓ Ensure your son has a healthy breakfast and are ready for the day ahead.
- ✓ Ensure your son leaves on time for school.

Every weekday evening:

- ✓ Check homework diary and prioritise tasks.
- ✓ List deadlines and when to complete tasks.
- ✓ Look at his book and discuss effective organisation of books / subject files.
- ✓ Consolidate today's learning – notes made each lesson should be revisited: review the day's notes; expand notes; check understanding key terms, concepts, etc.
- ✓ Complete homework.
- ✓ Additional independent study: wider reading and research; attempt exam questions; attempt past papers; read examiners' reports (these can be found on exam board websites); prepare for upcoming units of work.
- ✓ Prepare and pack bag for the next day.
- ✓ Insist on a sensible bed time.

5. Insist on ACTIVE study:

Passive Study: reading from notes / exercise / text books is **not** effective.

Active Study: note-taking; mind-mapping; creating revision cards; storyboards; attempting timed condition responses (with no books or resources); etc.

6. Time management

- ✓ Split revision and independent study completed at home into bitesize chunks: 1 hour per subject; avoid spending prolonged periods only focussing on one subject.
- ✓ Getting up and moving around every 20 minutes or so is recommended, even if it's just to get a drink of water.
- ✓ Insist on breaks and relaxation time – studying every minute of every day isn't effective or healthy.
- ✓ Limit the amount of time expected to assist with helping with siblings and house chores – whilst it is important that students learn to balance multiple tasks, they must also be allowed to spend adequate time on their studies.

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