

12 Useful Links



1. Student Minds- info@studentminds.org.uk
2. Exam Results Helpline If you live in Scotland, call 0808 100 8000/ 0800 100 900
3. <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/the-eatwell-guide/>
4. <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sleep-and-tiredness/sleep-tips-for-teenagers/>
5. BBC Bitesize Parents Toolkit: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/znsmyxc>
6. Young Minds Text line: Text YM to 85258.
7. Student Minds: info@studentminds.org.uk
8. <https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/children-and-young-adults/advice-for-parents/anxiety-disorders-in-children/>
9. www.mind.org.uk
10. www.samaritans.org
11. breathingspace.scot
12. www.ayemind.com
13. www.youngscot.org
14. www.samh.org.uk
15. www.seemescotland.org



Love, Faith and Understanding

@StLukesHigh / @WellnessawareSL



St Luke's High School

**‘Supporting your Child’s
wellbeing through assessment’**

2021- 2022



Love, Faith and Understanding



@StLukesHigh / @WellnessawareSL



Contents

1. Introduction
2. Coping with exam stress
3. Revision tips
4. How to support your child with planning for exams
5. Anxiety before exams
6. Symptoms of anxiety
7. Strategies to help ease anxiety in the moment
8. Sleep Hygiene
9. Fuel for Learning
10. Dealing with disappointing exam results
11. Where to get help and support
12. Useful Links/ Organisations



11 Support in St Luke's High School



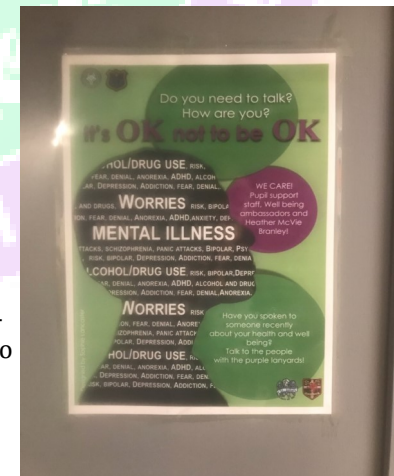
Every member of the St Luke's community is here to support and maximise your child's learning. Currently we offer a supported study timetable program and one to one sessions for those who have requested it. Pupils can find additional help from their subject teachers or their Pupil Support teacher. Remember no question is too silly to ask!!



Mental Health Ambassadors

17 staff are trained in Mental Health First Aid Training, to provide additional support for children. The group is now well established and the visibility for this service is now having a strong impact on our learners, with staff being formally identified through their purple lanyards and the notice board outside the Pupil Support.

If your child would wish to work with a mental health ambassador on the build up to exams please sign post them to the board outside of the pupil support base.



10 Dealing with disappointing exam results



If your child doesn't get the grades they want, it can feel devastating. But it really isn't the end of the world and it happens to lots of people, for all sorts of reasons.

Life doesn't always go to plan, but stay encouraging them to stay calm, and that everything is going to be ok is key. There are still loads of options available!! And remember the school is here to assist where they can!! The following can be helpful for those learners when receiving their prelim/ exam results.

BREATHE....

Take time to breathe. Don't panic the school and your support network are here to support you.



Talk. Speak to someone who can help you. Think about what it is you would like help with from your teachers/ home to help support you and explore what options you have.

Take your time. It is ok to feel disappointed but rushing into something because you feel 'you have to' can also have a negative impact in the long run. Sometimes you can feel like you are being left behind so jumping into the first option available isn't always wise. Pause and use the time to reflect and talk it through with those who can support you. There may be an option you have never considered be-



1 Introduction



Welcome to St Luke's High school's wellbeing guide booklet '**Supporting your Child's wellbeing through assessment**'.

Exams are a daunting time for both learners and parents. The fear of failure or not living up to expectation is a very real anxiety some children face prior to exams.

'I don't know how to start' 'Where do I begin?' 'I feel sick' 'There is too much' 'What if this happens?' 'I don't want to let anyone down' 'I have knots in my stomach' 'I'm not hungry' 'I can't sleep' 'I'm so tired' these are just some of the thoughts learners have before exams and as a parent knowing how to be supportive and help your child navigate through this period can be challenging!

This period can be extremely overwhelming for young people, some will ask for help, others will hide away and some will seem completely in control only to begin study leave and all of sudden emotions are running high, avoidance tactics have reached there peak and familiar claims of despair between parent and child begin.....

The aim of the booklet is to provide support in partnership with your child's teachers and suggest strategies that can protect your child's wellbeing on the build up to exams. We know that wellbeing is at the heart of our children's learning, feeling safe, happy, valued and rested will ultimately allow them to achieve.

2 Coping with exam stress



It is normal for young people to feel a bit worried about exams, especially if they're feeling under pressure. Exam stress can cause them to feel anxious and this might affect their sleeping or eating habits.

If you recognise any of this, or are worried that exam pressure is taking over their life, you are NOT ALONE, and there are things that the young people can do. See below for some simple tips.

Step 1: Let your trusted friends/ family member or teacher know you are struggling. They can then help you, encourage you and often a listening ear. Keeping it in until exam day will only cause things to get worse.

Step 3: Identify when your supported study is. Working through your concerns with a member of staff and other pupils can be nice! It will increase your confidence talking about different subject content and you made someone who is feeling similar and you can support them too!

Step 2: Ask for help. Think about what practical help you need. Talk through your concerns with your subject or pupil support teacher about what support is available. Remember you are not the only one, they will have spoken to lots of people before who are feeling the same and they are **HAPPY to HELP**.

Be kind to yourself

Think about all the things you have achieved so far. It can be helpful to write a list of all the things you like about yourself, and the things other people value about you too. If people around you are putting pressure on you, it can help to tell them what you feel able to achieve, and let them know that your expectations are different to theirs.

9 Fuel for Learning Continued...



2. Ditch the high sugar snacks!

Biscuits, crisps, chocolate bars, and soft drinks are high in calories, salt or sugar and are low in nutrients. Encourage yoghurt, fruit, nuts and dried fruit as snacks instead: they are easily portable and act as “power-houses” packed with protein, fibre and essential fatty acids, as well as B-vitamins, zinc and magnesium, required for neurotransmitter synthesis and function. *(The QR code recipe on pg78 could also be used as a snack!)* Other options before bed could be oatcakes, a glass of milk or a slice of toast.



3. High 5- Get your 5 a day in

Fruit and vegetables are good sources of many of the vitamins and minerals your body needs during your teenage years. Aim to eat at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and veg a day to improve brain function and maintain a health diet.



4. Drink Up!- Hydration is vital!!

Brains need to be hydrated throughout the day. Water and milk are undoubtedly the healthiest drinks for growing teenagers.

Try to limit sugary carbonated drinks, which not only causes “sugar-highs” leading to lethargy. 8-10 glasses of water a day/ 2L is the government recommendation.



9 Fuel for Learning

Getting your teen to eat healthy foods can be hard at times! But we know the correct fuel will support their growth both mentally and physically.

Eating a varied and balanced diet as shown in the **Eatwell Guide**, (scan QR Code for more information from NHS) will provide your teen with all the energy and nutrients they need, allowing their body to grow and develop properly. Some important nutrients to be aware of are: iron, vitamin D and calcium.



Don't FEAR! They can still have those treats but in moderation, eating a balanced diet is key.

1. Breakfast- Teenagers are more likely to concentrate and perform better at school than those who do not eat breakfast. Options can include eggs which make an excellent protein breakfast, packed with choline, they help in

memory development and performance. Alternatively, encourage them to replace sugary breakfast cereals with complex carbohydrates by opting for something like porridge, which will ensure slow energy release to fuel the brain and help them get through the school morning or that long exam!

'My child doesn't eat breakfast'- homemade overnight oats, homemade breakfast bars or a smoothie made with milk, yoghurt and blended fruit to drink, "on the go", will ensure a good delivery of protein and essential brain-boosting nutrients. (QR code for recipe for homemade breakfast bars).



3 Revision Tips for young people



Break your work into small chunks and use your daily/ weekly timetable. This can prevent you feeling overwhelmed and make your learning much more manageable.

Take a break!

Regular breaks are important as are scheduling in YOU time. You can only retain a certain amount and remember your best is all you can do. Putting yourself under pressure to study all day is no fun and won't be beneficial in the long run leading to burn out.

Remember none two people are the same. We all learn differently some like to make notes, others like to make diagram and use mind maps. You may even prefer to go for a walk with flash-cards. Some like to talk it through with others. Find whatever works for you and stick with it.

Be realistic! Remember Rome wasn't built in a day. Organising your study time and spreading your time out will ensure you have a balance and prevent unnecessary stress.

Don't compare. Focus on yourself not others. Wasting energy on comparing your revision to others how much they are doing, how well they 'seem' to be coping is a distraction. You are you and remember we are all different.

4 How to support your child with planning for exams



- Work with your child to find what revision style works for them (*Please see the study skills booklet for more tips*).
- Encourage your child to take revision breaks and find a balance between studying and doing things they find enjoyable and relaxing.
- Make sure they are eating and drinking at regular intervals.
- Encourage them to take some time after revising to wind down.
- Reassure them – reinforce that you are and will be proud of them no matter what happens.
- Remain positive and hopeful!



8 Sleep Hygiene Continued



3. Cut out the caffeine

Reduce or cut drinks with caffeine in – found in drinks such as iron-bru, cola, tea and coffee, 'zero' and 'diet' drinks also contain caffeine and aspartame which can also have a negative impact on sleep.

4. Reduce binge eating

Reducing high sugar snacks before bedtime can disrupt sleep

Let teenagers know that eating too much, or too little, close to bedtime can lead to an overfull or empty stomach. This can also cause discomfort during the night reducing sleep quality.

5. Establish a good routine

Encourage your teenager to get into a regular bedtime routine. Doing the same things in the same order an hour or so before bed can help them drift off to sleep.

Create a sleep-friendly bedroom

Ensure your teenager has a good sleeping environment – ideally a room that is dark, cool, quiet and comfortable.

6. Talk through any problems

Talk to your teenager about anything they're worried about. This will help them to put their problems into perspective and sleep better.

Using the worry box/ or bucket strategy from pg7 could also help 'overthinking before bed'

7. Avoid long weekend lie-ins - (I can hear the outbursts of laughter!!!)

Encourage your teen to not sleep in for hours at weekends. Late nights and long lie-ins can disrupt their body clock and make it harder to sleep come Monday.

8 Sleep Hygiene

A good nights sleep is just as important as regular exercise and a healthy diet. Research shows a minimum of 8 to 10 hours' of good sleep on school nights is recommended for teens. On the build up to exams the temptation to work later and revise, or poor quality sleep with increased anxiety over exams can affect the quality and length of sleep your child is having.

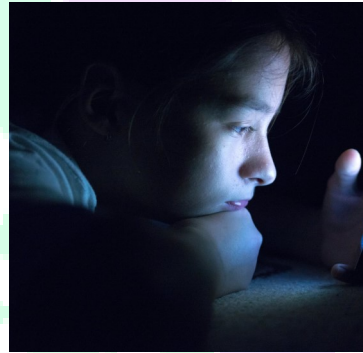
Below are some useful tips to improve the quality of sleep and ensure they are healthy and well rested for school.

1. Reduce/ limit screen time in the bedroom

If possible, do not have a mobile, tablet, TV or computer in the bedroom at night, as the light from the screen interferes with sleep.

Having screens in the bedroom also means your teen is more likely to stay up late interacting with friends on social media.

Encourage your teenager to have at least an hour to two hours of screen-free time before going to sleep. This encourage the brain to relax and release the hormone melatonin, that produces feelings of sleepiness.



2. Exercise for better sleep– THIS IS VITAL

Regular exercise helps you sleep more soundly, as well as improving your general health.

Teenagers should be aiming for at least 60 minutes' exercise every day, including aerobic activities such as walking, running or playing their chosen sport. This can be incorporated into their study plan (*see study skills booklet*) and is a vital part to a healthy routine.

Fresh Air! Exercising out in daylight will help encourage healthy sleep patterns, too. Further research also shows exercising in nature can also have positive effects on self esteem and improve mood in particular reducing those with anxiety.



5 Anxiety before exams

Anxiety is a feeling of worry or fear that is experienced as a combination of physical sensations, thoughts and feelings.

All children and young people feel worried sometimes, and this is a normal part of growing up. At certain points young people may become more worried such as on the build up to exams.

Anxiety can become a problem when a young person feels stuck in it, or when it feels like an overwhelming, distressing or unmanageable experience. If this kind of worrying goes on for a long time, it can leave a young person feeling exhausted and isolated, and limit the things they feel able to do.

The analogy of 'Bucket stress' is explained in the video (scan the QR code). The idea being that everyone's bucket is different and many factors can cause it to overflow such as pressure of exams, keeping up with others, feeling inadequate, the feeling of not doing enough, worrying about different subjects, the outcome of their exams are all very real 'stresses' that are filling the buckets of our young people.



A helpful task can be identifying what stresses are fillings that young persons bucket and then working together/ in partnership with their teachers to identify strategies that can prevent it from overflowing.

Creating a worry box, where your child writes down their worries and put them in a worry box can also be another helpful strategy. Giving these worries a physical place where they can be 'held' can be effective. Or they might prefer a self-soothe box (*see QR code video*), which they can fill with things that help them when they feel anxious – like photos, fidget toys, scented oils and positive quotes.



6 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.

These lists are by no means exhaustive, but may give an indication on the build up to exams if a particular young person is needing support and also explain why they may not be acting their 'usual selves'.

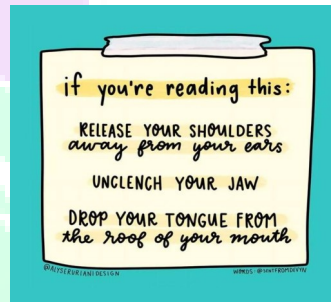
Physical symptoms:

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 urinate more than usual



Thoughts and feelings:

Preoccupied by upsetting, scary or negative thoughts nervous, on edge, panicky or frightened. Overwhelmed or out of control, feeling full of dread

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')

Self-harming, eating more or less than usual, using excessive exercise as a coping mechanism



7 Strategies to help anxiety in the moment

When your child is in the middle of a very anxious moment, they may feel frightened, agitated or worried about having a panic attack.

This can happen before entering the hall, the night before or can be spontaneous on the build up to exams. The important thing to do in the moment is to help them calm down and feel safe.

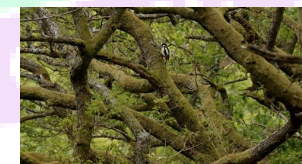
Breathe. Counting slowly to five as you breathe in, and then five as you breathe out. If this is too much, try starting with shorter counts. If it works for them, gradually encourage your child to breathe out for one or two counts longer than they breathe in, as this can help their body relax.

Connecting all 5 senses. Connecting with what they can see, hear, taste, touch and smell can reduce the intensity of the anxiety. A nice task here is asking the child to write down two things of each, this allows them to become more present and switch their concentration, allowing them to become more present.

Reassure them that their anxiety will pass. It can be helpful to describe the analogy of a wave that they can ride or surf until it peaks, breaks and gets smaller.

Visualisation. Visualising a safe and relaxing place this could be their bedroom, a grandparent's house, a favourite place in nature or somewhere they've been on holiday. Sometimes holding a memento of a relaxing place, like a seashell or pebble, can help.

Carrying out an activity that helps them relax. This could be running, walking, listening to music, painting, drawing or colouring-in, writing in a journal, watching a favourite film or reading a favourite book.



BBC Springwatch mindfulness clip ↗

