



Studying at St Augustine's CE High Sixth Form Information for parents and carers

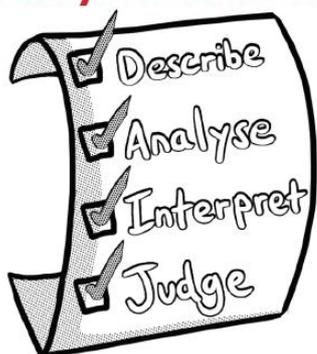
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Becoming an Independent Learner

Information for parents and carers

Did you know?



'Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach him **how** to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime.' You may have heard this ancient Chinese proverb, and it explains precisely why we want to develop students as independent learners.

Research by the Higher Education Academy has highlighted its importance: 'Helping students to learn independently is critical to their future success', Professor Stephanie Marshall, Chief Executive, HEA.

What can you do?

Students need to understand that there are benefits to moving out of their comfort zones, and they will make mistakes when learning to work independently – encourage this because we learn from our mistakes and failures.

Encourage your son/daughter to sign up for MOOCs. MOOCs are online courses that are offered, free of charge, by universities across the world and will give them a taster of what studying at university is like.

Your child should be tracking what they do know and what they do not know in each of their subjects so they can work on their areas of weakness. There are many opportunities to enter academic competitions, some of which are run by universities. You could encourage your child to enter these – they look impressive on university and apprenticeship applications.

One important aspect of being an independent learner is knowing when to ask for help – your child should always ask their teacher if they need support.

Encourage your son or daughter to share/discuss the work that they are doing, and the progress they are making. Think about setting an example and signing up for a MOOC that interests you. Check some out on www.futurelearn.com.

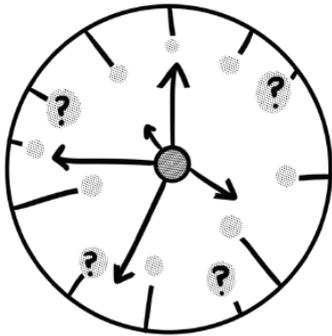
Encourage your child to have a tidy space to work in - it can reduce stress and improve productivity. Another way to maximise opportunities for work and reduce distractions is to ensure the space is organised with everything needed for studying: laptop, books, pens and any other equipment.



Dealing with Pressure

Information for parents and carers

Did you know?



Increasing numbers of young people are seeking help because of exam-related stress and the pressures of doing well in their academic studies. The NSPCC has reported that there has been a sharp rise in the number of counselling sessions for 16-18 year olds, with many people worried about getting into universities and others concerned about their parents' reactions to results.

Reward effort more than grades - research shows that praising effort gets better results.

What can you do?

Your child's welfare is really important to us. Learning how to be independent at the same time as considering their own future can sometimes feel overwhelming. Here are some ways that you can help them. Sometimes, some quite basic things are really crucial in periods of pressure: your child's mental energy, quality of sleep, ability to rest and recover, how much physical activity they are doing, their nutrition and how they are able to handle stress. It is important that they develop a Growth Mindset, looking at goals, motivation, focus and self-belief and understanding that if they cannot do something at the moment, they can persevere and achieve.

One of the key trigger points for high degrees of pressure is when students do not feel that they are in control of their work. Getting organised so that work is not last minute helps to reduce stress. The best way to revise is in short, manageable chunks with breaks in between.

Although sometimes teenagers like to think they can handle very late nights, that is not what the evidence suggests. Lack of sleep will quickly lead to underperformance and feelings of stress and anxiety. Encourage them to get eight hours sleep a night.

Research shows that high use of social media is linked to poor mental health. One recent study shows that young adults who used social media heavily were three times more likely to be depressed than occasional users. Another study discovered that young people who exceeded two hours of social media use per day were more likely to claim that their mental health was 'fair' or 'poor' than occasional users. Sometimes it is good to take your child out of the house for a break – go for a walk or for a drink, simply to get some fresh air. Experts say that this very simple act can make a difference to our mental health. For support and advice, go to

www.childline.org.uk



Explaining the UCAS Process

Information for parents and carers

Did you know?

Approximately 700,000 people apply for full-time undergraduate courses at over 380 universities and colleges across the UK each year.



What is the UCAS Process?

UCAS stands for the University and Colleges Admissions Service and is the organisation that administers and processes applications to universities.

The process for sixth forms starts in the summer term when students register on the UCAS website and begin the completion of their application form. The application form is divided into straightforward sections: personal details, course choices, education history, employment history and a personal statement. A member of staff, often the tutor, will provide a reference. By the end of the summer term, most students have completed much of the application form and have made a start with the personal statement.

There are key application dates of which you need to be aware (these are for 2019 entry; they are normally the same every year):

October 1st Deadline for music courses via UCAS Conservatoires.

October 15th Deadline for Oxford, Cambridge and most courses in Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Medicine. (There are also extra admissions tests with many of these applications.)

January 15th Application deadline for the majority of undergraduate courses.

Once an application has been sent to UCAS, it can be tracked. A university may offer a student a conditional place for the course that has been applied for – so the student will have to achieve the grades or points asked for by the university to secure their place. Alternatively, they may be offered an unconditional place or be rejected. If a student is rejected from all of their university choices, they may re-start the application process in February when UCAS Extra opens, an opportunity to apply to different universities, or different courses.

What can you do?

One thing you can do is to take your child to visit universities, if this is a possible, or look online at each campus. It's also helpful to discuss different options with your child – find out why they want to go to university. Do they want to or are they 'following the crowd'?

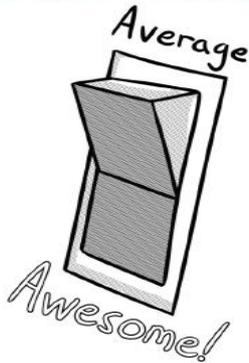
If you want to find out more, UCAS has many tools for parents. These look at the application process in detail, including accommodation and finance. You can also sign up for monthly newsletters to keep you in touch with the whole application process. Just search for parents at www.ucas.com.



Helping to develop Resilience

Information for parents and carers

Did you know?



Resilience is one of the greatest of attributes and learning how to be resilient can take our young people far. As Nelson Mandela said, 'Do not judge me by my success, judge me by how many times I fell down and got back up again.'

Your son/daughter will have to deal with a number of knockbacks when they are in Key Stage 5 as they prepare for their final exams – it is important to do everything that we can to ensure that they perform to the best of their ability.

What can you do?

There are three areas you can help them with:

Stamina

It is important that your son/daughter is able to handle the pressure of writing and thinking for a long period of time. Mocks (sometimes called PPEs) are important because it is similar to the real experience in the summer. Do encourage them to take these exams seriously – as if they were the real thing. Encouraging them to plan their revision is also really helpful.

Prepare to Perform

Leading up to mocks/PPES or external exam periods, it is important that they are able to sleep well, switch off from work at least an hour before they go to sleep and keep their phones at a distance. The glare of phone screens does not aid restful sleep. One of the most helpful things you can do for your child is to help them get into a good winding down routine.

Power to Perform

Health and physical wellbeing is also really important. It is helpful if students can eat the type of food that will give them energy through an exam. If they eat lots of sugar before exams, their energy levels can easily drop in the exam.

In summary:

1. Being a role model
2. Help them set goals
3. Keep them active
4. Healthy eating
5. Time out
6. Sleep patterns - keep regular
7. Unplugging phones & devices
8. Staying cool and calm
9. Belief
10. Be supportive



Post-18 Pathways

Information for parents and carers

Did you know?



Millennials are likely to have **TWELVE** jobs in their working lives. Jane Warren, CEO of Investec Click and Investec, said, "The days of having a job for life have long been over and our findings show that younger people are keen to take control of their careers by switching jobs to meet their objectives, despite the greater insecurity this brings."

The career path that our young people take at 18 may be the first of many.



What can you do?

Deciding what you want to do or be in the future can be very daunting for young people, and also a milestone for you as you watch your child starting to think about becoming much more independent. It is important that you ask them to consider what they really like, and the things that they could do – they shouldn't rule anything out at this stage.

Encourage them to do research. They can look at career videos and consider the facts and figures or careers they may be interested in.

They could look at the range of apprenticeships that are available and where they can lead – they are a completely viable alternative to a traditional university route.

The college will help with the university application process, from starting to consider what to study to how to apply for finance and accommodation.

Ask them if they are going to do work experience so they can gain more understanding of a potential career, or to help in the development of soft skills that will enhance their applications. You may have friends who are happy to have your son/daughter shadowing them for a couple of days in their holidays.

Perhaps they could consider some volunteering opportunities that will serve to add to their experience, develop their soft skills and enhance their CVs.

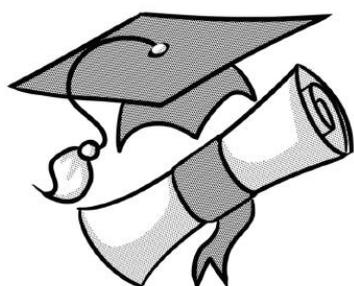
Have a look at some of the tools with your son or daughter that we will be using in the sixth form. For example: www.careermap.co.uk, the Careerometer from www.lmiforall.org.uk, information about apprenticeships and universities on www.ucas.com.



Preparing for University Applications

Information for parents and carers

Did you know?



Approximately 700,000 people apply for full-time undergraduate courses at over 380 universities and colleges across the UK each year.

The competition for places can be fierce so it is good for your son/daughter to be as prepared as possible.

What can you do?

A key thing to remember is that preparation is **the key** for a successful university application – and that it isn't always just about the grades. Here are some of the things that university admissions tutors will be looking out for, and what we will be doing to help:

A Strong Personal Statement: A student's personal statement should show passion and enthusiasm for their chosen subject area and demonstrate the wider skills and experiences that will enable them to succeed at university. If you can, prompt them to think about things they could do to enhance their application - the sooner the better!

A Passion for their Subject Area: Encourage your child to complete extra reading, engage with TED talks, complete MOOCs (online courses), and think outside the restrictions of the exam specifications. Most of these things are free but could make a real difference to them.

Character Development: The kind of things that will make them stand out from other applicants are the LORIC attributes: Leadership, Organisation, Resilience, Initiative and Communication. They often find it quite difficult to recognise their own strengths in these areas - it is helpful for you to remind them of their areas of strength.

Work Experience: Successful applications for some courses are enhanced by work experience. If you know anyone who would be willing to have them in to their work for a day or two, this can really help. It is also worth noting that the skills acquired through part-time paid and voluntary work are also valued by many universities; just make sure any part-time, 'small' job doesn't turn into one that distracts from their work.

University visits: Attending university Open Days is invaluable for a variety of reasons – and many are over the weekend so there's often no need to miss lessons. Students will be able to speak to course tutors, test the travel arrangements to and from home, look at the location, accommodation...a whole wealth of things that will ensure that they are making an informed choice. The universities often run sessions for parents at their Open Days.



Preparing to apply for an apprenticeship

Information for parents and carers

Did you know?



There are a whole range of apprenticeships available, and some provide the opportunity to achieve a full degree. They are increasingly being viewed as a genuine, high-quality alternative to a traditional university degree.

Apprenticeships have undergone significant changes in recent years, extending to a wide range of professions. Entry points are more and more likely to be at 17+ and 18+ in the future.

What can you do?

There are a number of apprenticeship levels:

Traineeships: no formal qualifications

Intermediate Apprenticeships: equivalent to five good GCSEs

Advanced Apprenticeships: equivalent to A-levels

Higher Apprenticeships: can lead to a HND, HNC or Foundation Degree

Degree Apprenticeships: lead to a full undergraduate degree and include study at a university.

Sixth Forms/colleges tend to focus on applications to **Higher and Degree** apprenticeships. Both Higher and Degree apprenticeships offer salaries; they are proper jobs but provide training and qualifications.

Higher Apprenticeships can be accessed in a range of careers such as law, broadcasting, engineering, finance, IT. The list is constantly growing. For example, a five-year Higher Apprenticeship in Law can result in the position of a Chartered Legal Executive, equivalent to a lawyer. The BBC offers, amongst other things, a Production Assistant Apprenticeship which involves working on live TV programmes, dramas, sport and radio.

Degree Apprenticeships can result in a wide range of professional careers, from a nuclear scientist to a solicitor. They are developed by employers, universities and professional bodies. Time is split between university and the workplace; the apprentice is fully salaried and, very importantly, pays no university fees.

What can you do?

It is worth being aware of what is available and the following links may be of interest to you as you have the conversations with your son/daughter:

www.getingofar.gov.uk

www.notgoingtouni.co.uk

A parent's guide to apprenticeship is also available on www.gov.uk

There is a great deal of information also on the university applications website, www.ucas.com



Dealing with Social Media

Information for parents and carers

Did you know?



According to OFCOM, a fifth of 16-25 year olds spend more than seven hours a day online every day of the week (August, 2018). This is the equivalent to over two full 24-hour days a week. And we're guessing that it's not all for studying.

Have a look at this video from YouTube, and perhaps discuss it with your son or daughter. It brings home the impact of over-reliance on social media – by us all. There are many other videos there that you could discuss as well: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=45&v=i9uydDEez3c

The internet is a wonderful thing, and can really support students, parents and teachers. Sometimes, though, there can be issues that arise that need to be addressed.

What can you do?

These are the kind of things you may want to talk to your son/daughter about:

Future employers may well track their use of social media and, depending upon what they discover, this could have an impact on whether a job is offered – or even kept.

A mind to be kind...highlighting the importance of not being a 'keyboard warrior' and thinking about the impact of comments and posts.

Being savvy...how not to fall for financial scams, especially now that our young people are starting to have their own financial independence.

Bullying and harassment...what to do if this happens, now or in the future.

Being vigilant...reminding our students of 'stranger danger'. It's not just for the little ones.

Talk to with your son/daughter about the positives and negatives of social media. Most young people are very aware of these and know that there are changes they could make to use the internet in general in a healthier way. Being upfront about our own habits (even any unhealthy ones!) and setting goals together can sometimes help to avoid making it a source of conflict.

One key aspect of this is discussing how social media can affect our reputation through the digital footprint we create for anyone to access.

There are lots of Ted Talks that show the way in which our phones and devices can take over our lives, and what we can do to take control – encourage your son/daughter to watch some of those.



What is Re-visiting?

Information for parents and carers

Did you know?



Research shows that within one hour, students will have forgotten an average of 50% of new information in a lesson. Within 24 hours, they have forgotten 70%....so it is especially important for our students that we help them to retain what they have learnt by re-visiting – a strategy for revision - and allowing them to think hard.

'Learning happens when people have to think hard' – Prof. Robert Coe, Durham University.

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