



THE  
**GARIBALDI**  
SCHOOL

**“Failure is not the opposite of success. Failure is part of success”**

# **Information and Guidance on positive Mental Health:**

## **The reality of Year 13 stress and anxiety**

***It is worth noting from the outset that formal exams in the summer of 2022 will go ahead and students should prepare with this point in mind.***

Year 13 can be an incredibly stressful time for students and parents alike. This year in particular, given the period of lockdown, levels of stress and anxiety are likely to be greater than usual. However, for students to recognise this reality and to talk about it openly with their peers, teachers and parents is crucial. During this year it's important that lines of communication between school and home are open. If staff in school have concerns about students these will be shared with parents and carers. We'd ask that similar concerns that are identified at home are shared with school as soon as possible so that we can work in partnership to offer the appropriate support and guidance.

Students throughout their time at the Garibaldi School have worked with the Attitudes to Learning system which in essence is a way of developing student character. A key element of this is resilience – the ability to deal with setbacks effectively and 'bounce back'. There will certainly be setbacks for students in Year 13 at times we will talk to them collectively and individually about seeing these setbacks as part of the journey to success.

It is also worth keeping in mind that what represents success at the end of Year 13 will not be the same for all students. Students are working at different levels and will have different plans for their 'next steps' post key stage 5. We are mindful of this, and while we encourage students to be aspirational and talk about 'amazing' outcomes we also encourage students to recognise their personal achievements and accomplishments irrespective of the success of others.

## **Managing stress and anxiety**

Students can often be reluctant to discuss how they're feeling about the prospect of mock exams and the final exams in the summer – particularly boys. For some there is a sense that acknowledging that they are worried, concerned or stressed somehow shows weakness. At times there can be a stigma around acknowledging these concerns because it demonstrates they care – something that might be embarrassing to admit to their peers. We know that all

students care about what they get out of their schooling and therefore we'll be vigilant to in responding to these signs so as to offer support as needed.

**“Stay positive, work hard  
and make it happen”**

Ultimately, concerns, worries, stress and anxieties are best addressed by students taking control of their preparations this year. Using the advice and guidance on revision provided, having a plan or revision and exam preparation, and building this over time as the exams approach will help settle nerves, build confidence and lay the foundations of exam success in the summer.

**YoungMinds - children and young people's mental health charity**

[youngminds.org.uk](https://www.youngminds.org.uk)

**NHS - Help your child beat exam stress**

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/coping-with-exam-stress/>

**Every Mind Matters - Looking after a child or young person's mental health**

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/childrens-mental-health/>

**Good to know – The Parents guide to exams**

<https://www.goodtoknow.co.uk/family/the-parents-guide-to-exams-64960>



# THE GARIBALDI SCHOOL

There is no one 'right way' to revise and prepare for exams effectively. You'll need to find out what works for you. Below there are a range of strategies to try and tips to keep in mind. The following advice should be seen as a starting point with some easy to follow steps and ideas to try out.

## Revision Advice:

“Push yourself, because no one else can do that revision for you”

### 10 steps to revision success

- 1. Revision space** - Find a good place to work. It should be quiet and free from distractions such as mobile phones, TVs and the internet.
- 2. Revision timetable** - Draw up a revision timetable and **FOLLOW IT**. It should be realistic, cover all subjects and allow you time off to relax. There is a **blank example of a timetable at the end of this section** or you can make an interactive revision timetable at <http://revisionworld.com/revision-timetable> (you'll need to register to use this function though).
- 3. Use Active Revision Strategies** - Don't just read through your class work or copy it out as this won't help you to learn. See the tips below on **active revision strategies**.
- 4. Revision guides** - Get a recommendation from your teacher as to which are most useful and then make sure you use them! Use highlighters to draw attention to key words/phrases.
- 5. Prioritise** - Try to revise the subjects that you find most difficult first of all. If not, you might end up skipping them as you are worn out after revising your other subjects.
- 6. Prompts** - Put key words/phrases/equations on Post It notes around the house so you'll see them often and hopefully remember them. You can make electronic flashcards to use on your computer at [www.quizlet.com](http://www.quizlet.com). Simply type in the key words you need to know and the program will look up the definitions (or you can type your own in). You can then use this to test yourself.
- 7. Seek help!** - Get friends and family on board to help you revise. If you revise with a friend, make sure that you set yourself some goals and know what you're going to focus on.
- 8. Past papers** - Make sure you get hold of some past papers, they're a really good way of knowing what to expect in the exam. It is important that you also see the mark scheme so you know what answers will get you the highest marks. You can request paper copies of these from teachers, or you may already have been provided with these. Also check the moodle page for your subject – they may have uploaded some for you to access.
- 9. Use the internet** - You can download lots of revision materials from the internet. Try searching for mind maps on Google images. To get the best results, type in the name of the exam board, module and topic followed by 'mind map'.

**10. Find time to relax** – Don't forget to give yourself a break. At times some people put themselves under too much pressure in the lead up to exams. It's important to have some time out every day.

## Improving Memory

There is a big difference between short-term and long-term memory. If you study a topic one night and can recall most of it the next morning, don't be fooled into thinking that you will be able to remember it accurately in two months time.

**Chunking** - as the average person can only hold seven 'items' in short-term memory, grouping items together into 'chunks' can increase capacity.

**Repetition** - Studies indicate that 66% of material is forgotten within seven days if it is not reviewed or recited again by the student, and 88% is gone after six weeks. Don't make life harder for yourself - build in a brief daily and weekly review of material covered. It will save you having to re-learn material from scratch!

**Application and association** - The best way to channel material to long-term memory is to organise it into meaningful associations. Link it to existing information and topics and create vivid personal examples which act as 'mental hooks' or 'cues' for recalling material in the future.

**Use of mnemonics** - these are various word games which can act as memory aids and which allow personalisation and creativity for example the seven characteristics of living organisms - **Mr. Grief** (**M**ovement, **R**eproduction, **G**rowth, **R**espiration, **I**rritability, **E**xcretion, **F**eeding).

**Review** - Looking over a topic every now and then will help to keep it in the memory, taking away the need to cram before exams. Make a summary of the work and look over it ten minutes later, the next day, the next week and then the next month for a few minutes each time. This reinforces the knowledge learned. Therefore after a one hour memorising session:

- 10 minutes later revise the topic for 10 minutes
- 1 day later revise the topic for 5 minutes
- 1 week later revise the topic for 2-5 minutes
- 1 month later revise the topic for 2-5 minutes
- Before exams revise the topic as required.

**“Feeling discouraged?  
Remember diamonds are  
made under pressure”**

## Active Revision strategies



**gcsepod**  
education on demand

**Varying revision techniques**  
Research shows that WE REMEMBER...

- 20% of what we READ
- 30% of what we HEAR
- 40% of what we SEE
- 50% of what we SAY
- 60% of what we DO
- 90% of what we



**Talk about it with  
friends and family !**

## **For effective active revision use a range of strategies, but use what works:**

- Most students are not that clear on how best to revise – many will just read through their books – this is not effective.
- There is no one way to revise. But whatever strategies are used the best are those are active revision i.e.:

**revision cards, revision notes, mind maps, creating quizzes, use of revision work books, online revision quizzes, getting family members to test you...**

- **The best approach is to use a range of strategies but stick with those that seem to work – how do you know they work? That brings up the next piece of advice.**

## **Make a topic checklist**

- For each subject make a list of the major topics you have covered – this is called a topic check list. If you find it difficult to list the topics ask your teacher.
- For each subject look at the topics and decide the order. Start with a topic you liked or found easy. Remember you do not have to revise the topics in the same order you were taught them.
- Re-write the topic check list in the order you want to revise. Pin up the topic check list in your bedroom. Write the topics on your timetable too.
- Check your timetable to see which subject you have chosen to study and check the topic list for which specific part you have chosen to revise.

**“Every accomplishment starts with the decision to try”**

## **Organising your time**

- Set a definite time to start and finish revision sessions and stick to them. The best advice is to stick to the same routine as a school day.
- Revision sessions should be 1 ½ hours, about the same length as your exams.
- Work in good light, at a table and not in front of the TV. Some people like to revise to music. Just be careful, if you find yourself being distracted or singing along turn it off, it isn't helping. Keep the volume low. When you have a break play the music loud and lively!
- Try working on difficult topics in the morning when your mind is fresh.

## **Improving your concentration**

- Start with short sessions and gradually build up to longer sessions. **Try revising for 40 min, 10 min testing, 10 min resting.**

**“Forewarned, forearmed; to be prepared is half the victory”**



- For every hour you work you should have 10 min break.
- It will help your concentration if you vary the subject or topic during the revision session.
- Always attend revision session and remain focussed.
- Walking around whilst reading aloud can help concentration.
- When testing yourself answer out loud.
- Give yourself a reward when you complete a revision session.

## **Making Your Notes Useful**

**The purpose of making summary notes on a topic or section is to aid your overall understanding of material, to help you distinguish between what is really important information (depth) and what is merely supporting detail.**

**Sort out your filing system** - If you haven't already done so, get your subject folders and notes organised immediately. Invest in some ring binders, dividers, plastic pockets, etc. Have a separate folder for each subject (a permanent reference point) and then keep a 'current folder' for managing notes in progress.

**Less is always more** - When writing notes, remember they should contain a summary, not an extensive repetition of what is in the textbook. Don't crowd the page. Stick to main headings and sub-headings. Use abbreviations where appropriate. Try to reduce what you need to know on the topic down to one A4 sheet. Once you have an overview, it is easier to fill out the detail.

**Make your notes visual** - Ensure your notes have a memorable appearance so that you can recall them easily. Use illustrations, diagrams, graphs, colours, and boxes ('a picture is worth a thousand words'). Arrange the material in a logical hierarchy (title, sub-point, explanation, example). Ideally, you should be able to close your eyes in an exam and visualise a particular page of notes.

**Beware of transcribing and highlighting!** - Merely re-writing the text from the book into your notes does not ensure learning. Try to put things in your own words and devise your own examples to make the material more meaningful. Only use highlighters AFTER you have read the text a few times, thus ensuring you identify the most important material

## **Practising for exams**

**To prepare for an exam, you must practice doing what the exam requires you to do; giving out information, not taking it in!**

**“If you can't explain it simply you don't understand it well enough”**

**Make use of past papers** - These should be your constant companion in all revision tasks. For each topic you revise, consult the past questions on this subject and then attempt answers to them. Check your answers, fill in the 'knowledge gaps' where necessary, and file away the correct 'model answer' in your notes for future reference. You will also start to notice any trends in the questions asked.

**Follow the marks** - Mark schemes are an invaluable aid to exam preparation (available online). You can see how the marks are allocated for each question on the paper and what quantity or style of answer is required in each case. This knowledge will greatly inform your revision work and helps to remove the mystique of the exam.

## **Top Tips on Exam Strategy**

**Success in exams involves two ingredients - having a thorough knowledge of the subject matter AND making the most of your knowledge in the exam through effective answering technique. Two students with identical knowledge and attainment levels can sit the same exam and their final grades can differ significantly. The difference is down to having an effective strategy and exam technique.**

**Allow time to read the paper carefully:** The importance of reading the paper carefully and choosing your questions wisely cannot be emphasised enough at this stage. The natural inclination is always to start writing immediately and launch into a favoured topic. Resist the urge. Take your time. Be smart and size-up the paper before answering.

**Stick to your game plan:** An overall strategy should have emerged from your revision and exam preparation in each subject. This covers the areas you'll tackle, the topics you'll avoid if they appear on the paper, the sequence in which you will tackle the various sections, the style of answering you will employ in each subject, the amount of time you will allocate to answering each section. In some cases, this plan will work like a dream but there will always be surprises to deal with in some papers. Don't get flustered. Stick to your game plan, trust your judgement, and move on.

**Sweep up any mistakes:** In the pressure of the exam hall, it is easy to make simple errors. Always leave time at the end of the exam to check for errors.

**Attempt all questions:** It is amazing how many exam scripts are handed in unfinished. Remember that it is much easier to get the first 20% of the marks for any question than the final 5%. You can always polish an answer further but, if there is no attempt made at part of a question, the examiner can't give you any marks.

### **Some key terms used in examination questions, and what they mean:**

**Account for** - Explain the process or reason for something being the way it is.

**Analyse** - Explore the main ideas of the subject, show they are important and how they are related.

**Comment on** - Discuss the subject, explain it and give an opinion on it.

**Compare** - Show the similarities and point out the differences.

**Contrast** - Say how something is similar and how it may be different too.

**Define** - Give the meaning. This should be short.

**Describe** - Give a detailed account.

**Discuss** - Explore the subject by looking at its advantages and disadvantages (i.e. for and against). Attempt to come to some sort of judgement.

**Evaluate** - Give an opinion by exploring the good and bad points. It's a bit like asking you to assess something. Attempt to support your argument with expert opinion.

**Explain** - Describe, giving reasons and causes.

**Factors** - The fact or circumstances that contribute to a result.

**Give an account of** - Describe.

**Give reasons for** - Use words like **because** in your answer as you will be explaining how or why something is that way.

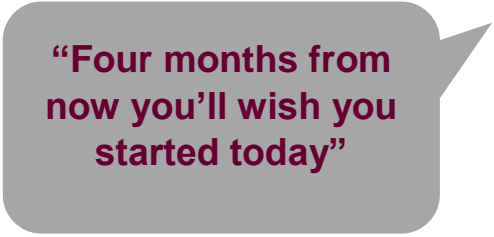
**Identify** - Recognise, prove something as being certain.

**Justify** - Give a good reason for offering an opinion.

**Outline** - Concentrate on the main bits of the topic or item. Ignore the minor detail.

**State** - Write briefly the main points.

**Summarise** - Give the main points of an idea or argument. Leave out unnecessary details that could cloud the issue.



**“Four months from now you’ll wish you started today”**





## Revision timetable:

Year 13 Revision Timetable															
Guideline for no. of hours of revision per week					HT1+2		10 hours		HT3+4		15 hours		HT5		20 hours
	09:00	10:00	11:00	12:00	13:00	14:00	15:00	16:00	17:00	18:00	19:00	20:00	21:00		
Monday															
Tuesday															
Wednesday															
Thursday															
Friday															
Saturday															
Sunday															
<b>Subject colour coding</b> – in the spaces below write in your subjects and give each a colour. Use these colours to shade the time blocks above to highlight when you will be focusing on this subject. Also set some specific time aside for testing your revision / completing exam questions.															
										Testing / exam questions					