

Action for Carers Surrey

**Surrey Young Carers
SUPPORT PLAN PACK:**

*Exam Busting &
Resilience*



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1. Learning and caring?

At the age of 16 (the end of Key Stage 4 and Year 11), all pupils take a series of exams called the **General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE)**, usually in about eight to ten subjects, which must include English and Mathematics.

KNOW YOUR LEVELS...

T-levels

T-levels were introduced in 2020 and are being rolled out across the country. You can take a two-year course designed with employers and spend approximately 80% of your time in a classroom setting at school or college and 20% on an industry placement with an employer. One T-level is equivalent to three A-levels.

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships combine part-time study with training in a paid job. You will spend most of your time at work and at least 20% of your time 'off-the-job' studying, usually in a classroom setting at a college or with a training provider. From age 16, a young person will usually begin a level 2 or level 3 apprenticeship.

GCSEs

GCSEs provide the first formal record of your academic ability and potential.

Studying GCSEs provides you with an essential foundation in a range of subjects. It allows you to focus on topics of interest and gives you the chance to explore them deeper in further education. They act as an educational gateway, unlocking access to higher education and further fields of study while providing the footing of whichever career you decide to pursue.

A-levels

Most students select three subjects to study at A-level, over a two-year period. However, you could choose to combine A-levels with other qualifications or to study more than three A-levels.

2. Learning and caring continued...

16+ options

There are many ways to continue in education and training at 16+. You don't have to stay in school.

Students aged 16+ who are ready to begin level 3 training and education have three main choices.:

1. School Sixth Form or Sixth Form College
2. Further education College
3. Apprenticeship
4. Employment or volunteering (for 20 hours a week or more) combined with a training course.

There is a college course for everyone, no matter what happens during your GCSE years. If you don't get your predicted grades, college might adjust your starting level or suggest a different course.



FOR FURTHER ADVICE AND SUPPORT ON:

- ✓ Apprenticeships or Traineeships
- ✓ Employment
- ✓ Education
- ✓ Funding
- ✓ Options

Visit the Surrey County Council site:

www.surreycc.gov.uk/children/support-and-advice/youth-voice/your-future/faqs



Examinations though insightful, don't provide an absolute indication as to a candidate's abilities.

Character traits like resilience and tenacity, along with prior experience, can be highly desirable with both prospective employers and educational institutions.

3. Exams can be stressful

Exam stress can be related to a negative previous experience of exams, poor preparation, worry about failure, or pressure to perform.

For children and young people who are generally anxious, the experience of taking exams can be very threatening and could lead to unmanageable increases in anxiety levels.

Children who find schoolwork a struggle, or those with special educational needs or mental health difficulties, may be more likely to experience academic anxiety. However, so can high achievers, particularly children who are overly perfectionist or whose parents have very high ambitions for them.

Teenagers who look after sick or disabled parents or relatives are put under huge stress at exam time with **70%** of young carers aged 14 and over saying it's the most difficult time.



Managing time

Being a YOUNG CARER at this time can be even more difficult. Fitting in revision around caring for a family member can be challenging.

Being a young carer can add more pressure to exam time and the main difficulty can be not having enough time to revise.

Young carers have to use any spare time they might have to revise and prepare for exams – time that other young people would be able to use to step away from their books and recharge their batteries.



4. Reducing stress and worry



"Take time out of your day to breathe, try not to compare yourself to others (easier said than done but it's important). Schedule in time for yourself and reach out if it's affecting your mental health."



Be realistic about what you can achieve in a day! An unrealistic revision plan won't help you and will put you under unnecessary stress.

Limit social! Try to avoid checking apps like Instagram and TikTok while revising. We all know how quickly the time disappears when you're swiping through your social feeds.

Not everyone studies the same way - Some people prefer to read, others find it helpful to make notes or draw diagrams, while others prefer to talk things through.

Do what works for you.

Focus on you and don't compare yourself to others. It can be really stressful when you think everyone is doing better than you, spending more time on revision than you, or just not stressing out as much as you. But we're all different and that's ok. Remember, your friends don't have their results guaranteed – life is unpredictable – and they might well be feeling just as worried as you are.

Five-step study plan

by @KateJones_teach & @Inner_Drive | innerdrive.co.uk

1. Make a list - What do you need to know?



2. Timetable a spaced schedule - Study each topic little but often, and leave yourself enough time.



3. Use effective study strategies - Test yourself and keep the re-reading and highlighting to a minimum.



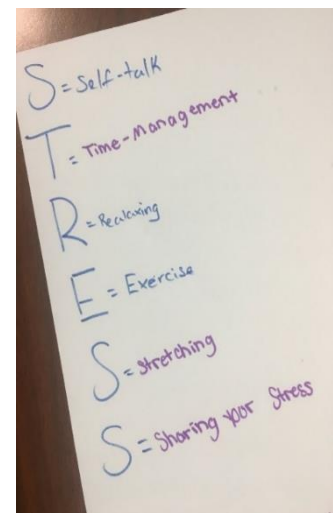
4. Identify the gaps in your knowledge - What do you need to study more? What can you move on from?



5. Close the gaps - Repeat steps 3 & 4 as many times as you need until you are comfortable with everything.



DON'T STRESS, DO YOUR BEST & FORGET THE REST!



5. Revision tips



In studying, revision will help you remember the important facts, figures, topics and methodologies that you studied in the past. In examinations, revision will help you be better able to answer test questions.
You'll feel prepared.



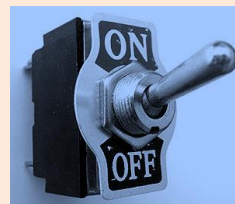
Revision is super-important for several reasons:

- ✓ it helps you reduce pre-exam anxiety
- ✓ revision gives you a good estimate of how well you know the subject and what you still need to work on
- ✓ it solidifies what you've learnt
- ✓ Bonus! Revision prevents those pesky brain freezes in the middle of a test and improves your overall performance.

Revision takes much less time than learning something for the first time, and you can do it even more effectively by being organised and resourceful.



TIME	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
8:00 AM - 9:00 AM	SCHOOL	SCHOOL	SCHOOL	SCHOOL	SCHOOL	RECREATION	RECREATION
9:00 AM - 10:00 AM	HOMEWORK	FREE	HOMEWORK	FREE	HOMEWORK	FREE	HOMEWORK
10:00 AM - 11:00 AM	DINNER	DINNER	DINNER	DINNER	DINNER	FREE / LAUNCH	FREE / LAUNCH
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM	HOMEWORK	HOMEWORK	HOMEWORK	HOMEWORK	HOMEWORK	FREE	FREE
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE
1:00 PM - 2:00 PM	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE
3:00 PM - 4:00 PM	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE
4:00 PM - 5:00 PM	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE
5:00 PM - 6:00 PM	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE
6:00 PM - 7:00 PM	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE
7:00 PM - 8:00 PM	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE
8:00 PM - 9:00 PM	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE
9:00 PM - 10:00 PM	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE
10:00 PM - 11:00 PM	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE
11:00 PM - 12:00 AM	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE



TOP TIPS for managing revision and exams

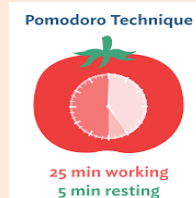
- ✓ Plan revision well in advance of exams and ask school about providing a quiet space for studying in between exams if it is difficult to study at home.
- ✓ Speak to adults you trust about helping you put support in place prior to exams, such as enlisting extra support from friends and relatives short term. Get them to help you produce a study timetable.
- ✓ Make sure you have time to relax and switch off from studying and caring, and are getting enough sleep. Take a walk and get fresh air in between exams.
- ✓ Get friends to help you study; ask each other questions and try to make it more fun!

6. Revision tips continued



Eat/sleep/revise/repeat – little and often!

There is a great technique if you're having trouble concentrating. **The Pomodoro method** follows a basic pattern of 25 minutes studying followed by a five-minute break. If you do four of these in a row you can then have a longer break. It works because you learn better in short sessions and you don't have to punish yourself with unbroken hours of revision



Create mental associations - A popular way of doing this is to visualise your revision into scenarios, for instance if you do chemistry and you need to remember the chemical name of oxygen you might think of mobile phone salesmen because the answer is O2. Another thing to do is to relate topics to things you enjoy, like game characters, movie titles, books or sports players. Having trouble remembering the story of your English text? Imagine it being read out by your favourite football commentator or fictional character.

Blurting is a new revision technique that you have probably seen all over TikTok. It's all about testing yourself over and over again until you remember the information.



Stick to the fonts you know for your notes, unless you're dyslexic. If you're dyslexic, download the dyslexic font as it's designed to be more readable for you, or use Comic Sans as it's also easier for some people to read (despite the fact that no one likes it). Certain fonts like Arial or Times New Roman are considered the fastest fonts to read as they are most familiar to the majority of people. When it comes to fonts, familiarity equals speed, which means the font you always read and type with will be fastest for you.

Chew gum and buy a weird air freshener - Nothing like a condensed milk air freshener to keep you more alert. Unfamiliar scents tend to keep you more awake as you haven't gone nose blind to them – perfect for those longer, harder revision sessions. Chewing gum is also proven to help concentration. This is, admittedly, a last resort.



Take breaks from social media before exams.
Stepping away from social media while revising will do wonders for your stress levels.

7. Self-care

Self-care is essential for good health and wellbeing. Far from being selfish, self-care can help you to be a healthier, happier person, at home and at school.



10 REASONS why it is important for carers to take a break from caring

- ✓ Even a short break can help to reduce stress!
- ✓ A break can give you the time and space to look after your own health.
- ✓ A break can allow you to pursue a hobby or leisure activity. This could just be going for a walk.
- ✓ Spending quality time with friends or family may improve wellbeing and reduce feelings of isolation.
- ✓ A break can help you with your caring role, so you can return after a rest with a fresh mind.
- ✓ If you lack concentration or feel really tired, taking a break can have a positive effect.
- ✓ Making time to care for yourself is like an investment for the future!
- ✓ Breaks can give you some space to think about how to juggle your school-life and caring responsibilities.
- ✓ They can help improve your relationships, in particular with the person who you care for.
- ✓ Taking a break also means that the person you are looking after may enjoy a change of routine or new experiences.

**Taking care
of yourself.**

is the most
powerful way to begin

**to take care
of others'**

-Bryant McGill



3-step self-compassion break

During or after a stressful event, practice a three-step, self-compassion break.

1. The first step is to acknowledge this is a difficult moment (*i.e. "This is stressful"*).
2. The second step is to acknowledge that stress and suffering are parts of life (*i.e. "Other people feel this way; I'm not alone"*).
3. The last step is to ask yourself, what can I do to be kind to myself? It might help to think about what a loved one might tell you (*i.e. "May I accept myself as I am; may I be strong"*).

8. Useful revision apps

Exams are designed to test your knowledge of specific subjects. They can be academically challenging but should not be the reason for you panicking and losing sleep – everything you need to know has already been covered in class, and you only need to revise it.

Some of these helpful apps could be just the thing you're looking for!

	<p>StudySmarter have an excellent selection of subject-based materials, study sets and flashcards to make your learning easy and fun!</p>
	<p>GCSE Pod – This app covers every subject and allows teachers and parents to get involved and help you out. It aims to guide you through building functional skills in addition to learning your subject matter.</p>
	<p>GCSE Maths Super Edition Lite – Is it just a meme that everyone struggles with maths? If you're a whizz-kid, you can skip this one, but the rest of us might find it useful. As the name suggests, this one is specifically focused on maths and covers everything from arithmetic to geometry with a fine selection of quizzes that simulate the exam.</p>
	<p>Temple GCSE – This is an interactive temple-building app. To get started, you lay the foundation of your temple through questions, tests, and assessments. As your learning progresses, the structure will follow suit. It's been designed by professors with GCSE exams in mind, so you'll know exactly what to expect when the day comes.</p>
	<p>BBC Bitesize – This app is a lovely base of knowledge on all subjects you may need to pass. It's divided into chapters you can interact with and is searchable by keywords. As a result, you have an easy-to-navigate base of information cut into bite-size pieces that won't hurt your brain.</p>
	<p>If you need a bit of help unchaining yourself from your phone, give the Hold app a go. Hold gives you real rewards (including Amazon vouchers, cinema tickets and free coffee) for simply avoiding the use of your phone. You get points every 20 minutes. This means you can break up your revision periods with some well-earned rests. They'll be well-needed, too. It's thought that revision is less effective if you study for any longer than about 90 minutes straight.</p>
	<p>https://www.savethestudent.org/ the website for <i>everything</i> on student finance. If you fancy treating yourself (you deserve it) have a look at the website to see if there are any good discounts going, to help you keep costs down.</p>

9. Where can I get more help?

Surrey Young Carers (part of Action for Carers Surrey)

We're here for you! Call us on 01483 568269 or email syc@actionforcarers.org.uk

And read lots more on our website <https://www.actionforcarers.org.uk/who-we-help/young-carers-under-18/>

www.actionforcarers.org.uk – our website provides lots of information about being a young carer, different disabilities and illnesses and other support available to you and your family.

Anyone can call on 0303 040 1234 and speak to our Helpline for help and advice.

Additional help

- www.NSPCC 0800 111 111 – this helpline supports children who need help and support.
- www.kooth.com – an online wellbeing support network for young people.

Surrey Young Carers, part of Action for Carers Surrey
Call on us on **0303 040 1234**, option 3,
or email syc@actionforcarers.org.uk
www.actionforcarers.org.uk



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