



# LEARNING TO LEARN

## A Guide for Pupils and their Parents





- "I don't know how to revise."
- "I revise by reading and re-reading my notes loads of times."
- "I put off revision until the last minute."
- "I cannot remember things."
- "Revision is boring."
- "He/she doesn't know how to start his/her revision."

Does any of this sound familiar?

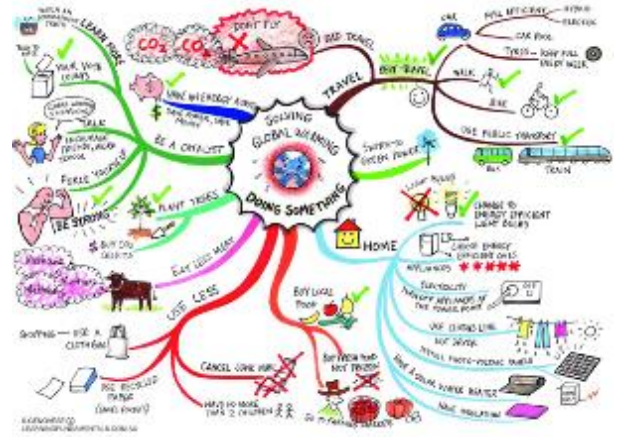
A lot of pupils crisis-manage their revision by cramming and use their time poorly because for them revision consists of simply reading through their notes. For many pupils, this is boring and is of little use.

**It is hoped that the ideas set out in this guide will help pupils in all year groups.**

### How can I help as a parent?

Your child will face a number of learning challenges in his quest for success and certain behaviours will be encouraged as he progresses through Belfast Boys' Model School such as:

- Being more self-motivated and taking more responsibility for his own learning.
- Asking questions when he does not understand.
- Developing his ability to overcome frustrations, and strategies for persisting when he is learning material he finds challenging. Our advice would be: "If it's hard, you're learning." The boys need to learn how to allow setbacks to become valuable learning moments.
- Organising himself, his notes and information on different subjects - and different topics within these.
- Organising and planning his **time** over longer periods
- Planning and carrying out revision, using a variety of methodologies that work for them and avoiding merely reading and re-reading notes.
- Perfecting exam "technique" by answering questions and "doing" examples.



Mind maps are a particularly effective technique to revise from. Colour and image support words to help the information "stick."

### **Isn't it the School's job to be helping pupils to achieve academic success?**

Of course, the School will provide the teaching and learning support your son needs as he progresses through BBMS, but we view parents as an important part of the triangular relationship of school - pupil - parent, that promotes both a child's happiness and security in school - and also their ability to learn.



Helping your son to succeed will vary according to his needs and strengths. You may find that you will have little to do in some of the areas covered in this booklet while, in others, more support will be required. Some children will need very little help, but some will require assistance with homework and revision timetables, others with sorting and filing notes and handouts. A parent's role may be in one or more of the following:

- Providing the tools for homework and revision - a quiet space, pens, paper and other necessities.
- Showing an interest in the subjects being revised, helping as your son reviews his work and testing them when they ask you.
- Helping your child break tasks down so that they are manageable, keeping a subtle eye on progress and suggesting ways in which your son can best spend his revision time.
- Agreeing the rules for homework and revision, helping your child to make a realistic timetable, balancing work against the "fun" stuff and revising the plans as necessary.
- Supporting your child in sticking to the revision plan and keeping to the start and finishing times they have agreed.
- Providing favourite snacks and water for revision periods.
- Keeping up with regular "check-ins". Showing an interest in how the revision is going, talking through any difficulties and being prepared to help them reschedule their planning if necessary.
- Keeping things in perspective. Your son may not be doing things the way you would do them or as often as you would like but they are doing the best they can in the ways that work for them.



## Advice to pupils

### **Getting the Basics Right**

In order to ensure that you achieve your potential in school, it is important that you try to develop good study habits right from the beginning of your BBMS career.

Here are some helpful tips that will improve the quality of your studying:

#### **Where to study**

You can study anywhere, but obviously, some places are better than others. The place you choose, whether your bedroom, or another room in your house, should not be full of distractions. Your study space should be as quiet and comfortable as possible. Avoid somewhere where you will be interrupted. Avoid revising while the TV is switched on!



**Switch off your mobile phone when studying.**

### **Creating the Right Atmosphere**

**Don't try to do too much all at once.**

If you try to do too much studying at one time, you will get tired and your revision will not be very effective. Study in chunks: 20-50 minute time periods followed by a brief break (5-10 minutes) is the most effective way to study.

**Plan specific times for studying.**

Time is a very valuable resource. It is also one of the most wasted of resources. It is important to use your time effectively. Devise a timetable for completing your homework or a revision schedule before exams. Sticking to your schedule can be tough - but it will help to ensure that you do not simply revise those subjects that you like or find easiest.

**Sleep well.** The right amount of sleep is essential for being able to learn. Most of us need eight hours sleep each night. Before going to bed, try and spend some time relaxing so that the quality of your sleep is good. Before going to bed, try to relax by reading a book or listening to some music. Avoid watching TV or playing computer games late into the evening.

**You are what you eat!** Eating the right foods will help your brain work better and can help sharpen your memory, improve your mood and keep your mind active. Eating a well-balanced diet that includes foods from all the food groups is important. Breakfast helps to boost your thinking power so make sure that you have breakfast every morning. If you don't have time, a breakfast is available in the school canteen from 8.30am every morning. Drinking water is also important to help the brain to function. During the school day, you have access to free drinking water from the water fountains located around the school.

**Have a break!** In order to make the most of your studying, it is important that you take regular breaks and get fresh air. **Most importantly...remain positive as you CAN do it!**

### Example Revision Timetable

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
4-5pm	After school club	Science	Technology	RS		Day OFF	3sessions of subjects
5-6pm	Dinner						
6-7pm		French	English	LLW			You find difficult
7-8pm	Maths	Youth Club	Football		Football		
8-9pm	History						

**It is better to  
KNOW HOW TO LEARN  
than to know.  
-Dr. Seuss**