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He can spell better than me!!

help!

I'm sure my daughter doesn't want my help

I don't feel I have the confidence to help and I can't find the time



My job is done, they are studying for their exams



...but what can I do?

We all want the best for our children but as they grow older it can get more difficult as their learning changes and they want to be more independent.

This booklet can help you find new ways to coach your teenager, whether you are a parent, carer or other family member. It is not about telling them what to do, or doing it for them, it is about helping them find ways to help themselves.

He will never listen to me!



You're Not Alone

This booklet is designed to help you help your teenager.

You can coach and motivate your teenager to help them get the best out of their time at Rugby Free Secondary School.

Your own experiences are valuable. By sharing them with your teenager you can help them tackle challenges in different ways.

Parents and carers who work together with their teenager can help them focus on their future goals, stay positive and keep on track to make the most of their future.

You have the skills to make a difference to your child's future
This booklet aims help you find ways to coach your teenager by giving you:

- Tips and advice
- Suggestions for 'conversation starters'
- Ideas on ways you can draw on your own experience
- Information about where you can find out more
- Most importantly, the confidence to get involved and work as a team!



Your Involvement Is Important

There are several ways to help your teenager with their learning:

- Conversations
- Questions
- Listen
- Offer Ideas
- Show Understanding

Learning is the route to success for the future; it's worth investing in.

Imagine how your child might feel and what they might achieve if you regularly helped them.

Together you can work out how to approach their studies and the important choices they make at Rugby Free Secondary School.

Possible Conversation Starters

"I'd like to know more about your school project, what have you been asked to do?"

"Parents' evening is coming up. What could I ask your teachers about?"

Top Tips for Parents / Carers:

- Teenagers need support on their own terms – be open to their ideas and how they want you to help them
- Look for opportunities to open up discussions on issues or subjects
- Ask your teenager what they are studying and what they find hard – try to work out together how you can help
- Talk to your teenager about information their RFSS has provided them with
- You can talk to staff directly but make sure you think about how your teenager will feel about this



Top Tips for Parents / Carers:

- It may seem difficult at first, but breaking down what needs to be done into small chunks will make it easier for both of you
- Visit www.direct.gov.uk/curriculum to find out more about qualifications, exams and the subjects your teenager is studying
- Phone or email the school for information on the subjects you would like to know about
- Attend Parents' Evenings and ask what you can do to help with homework and revision
- Use Bromcom to track your child's homework and notes from their teachers
- Speak to your child's Head of Year / Assistant Head of Year for Pastoral information



You Don't Have To Be An Expert

You don't need to understand every subject to be able to help.

By talking to your teenager about the subjects they are studying you will be able to get a better understanding and be able to help them out.

Recognise and talk about where you're both making progress and build on it.

Plan ahead for future events. It is likely that your child will have:

- An Assessment
- Additional homework
- A Pre-Public (Mock) Exam

in the near future, so help them to be as ready as possible, so they can maximise their performance.

Possible Conversation Starters

"Have you got much homework tonight? Tell me about it. Let's see if there's anything I might be able to help you with."

"You did really well with that homework/test recently – let's have a look at what's coming up and have a think about what we can work on together."

A Little Goes A Long Way

As a parent/carer you already have lots of experience and you know your teenager better than anyone else.

Tell your teenager about your learning experiences and how you made decisions about your education and work.

Investing the time to help your teenager will pay off!

They are more likely to succeed in their school work and exams with your help.

Regularly taking an interest and having quick chats may work better than trying to do too much in one go.

Even if you can spare a few minutes it can make a big difference.

Possible Conversation Starters

““I know you’ve got exams coming up. Should we sit down and look at what you’ve got to do and try to come up with a bit of a plan?””

““Why don’t we talk about your new project on the way into town?””

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A Slimmer Version

A slimmer version of the key details can be found on the attached poster.

Feel free to pin it to your fridge!

SUPPORTING LEARNING AT RFSS

2024-2025 Academic Year

1. Morning Routines: Support your child in the morning by making sure they are awake and out of bed at their usual school time. Try to ensure this is consistent, as this routine will still be stored in the long-term memory of your child.

2. Food & Drink: It's a well-known adage that breakfast is the most important meal of the day, so do everything you can to make sure that this meal is not skipped. Foods with slow release energy such as toast (brown bread) and fruit are important, as these will help to give energy and support mental concentration. Eggs are also an excellent source of energy in the morning. Ensuring that your child brings a bottle of water to school, and has access to food in the day, is also important.

3. Evening Routines: Get to know your child's timetable and talk about what they have learned that day in the evening. Make this conversation a routine. If you are not familiar with a subject, get your child to teach you so that they are putting their new knowledge into practice.

4. Equipment: Pack the school bag the night before school, so they do not forget exercise books or other equipment such as PE Kit and/or Food & Nutrition materials. This also means that you aren't rushing around in the morning. Having a copy of your timetable on the wall at home helps to prepare a day in advance.

5. Sleep Patterns: Studies suggest that teenagers need around 10 hours of sleep per night in order to maximise learning in lessons. A lack of sleep can reduce decision-making skills and our reaction times.





Top Tips for Parents / Carers:

The 8 components for effective working spaces at home are:

Get rid of any clutter.

Keep distractions away

Be comfortable (but not too comfortable)

Let there be light.

Set the noise levels.

Personalise it.

Make it easy to manage your time.

Keep your supplies to hand.

The Home Environment

The four points below outline the best practices when working at home:

1. Identify and acknowledge potential distractions such as television, music, social media, games, mobile phones etc.
2. Limit access: For your working period, turn off your phone or put it in a different room, for example.
3. Work in chunks: Set a specific time limit (20 minutes is the most effective) and then have a break for 10 minutes. Reward yourself in this ten minute interlude.
4. Engage others: Make sure others do not distract you during this period. Resist the temptation to distract yourself with other people (unless you are working together).

Use the RFSS Learning Channel on YouTube to support your learning.

Alternatively, ask your teachers for a login for programmes such as Seneca and Bitesize.

Finally, other websites such as Continuity Oask can support your learning.



Revising for Assessments - Practical Strategies

Summarising:

When asked a question such as ‘what have you done today?’, you’ll likely provide a summary. This involves you selecting, organising and integrating the key moments of your day. Taking a similar approach with your studies can have a very powerful effect on your learning. What is absolutely key is that you use your own words and don’t mindlessly copy your notes or revision guide.

Self-Testing:

Research has shown that every time you bring a memory to mind, you strengthen it. The more challenging you make this retrieval, the greater the benefit. Self-testing improves the recall of information, transfer of knowledge and making inferences between information. Equally, there are many indirect effects such as a greater appreciation of what you do and don’t know, which helps you plan your next steps.

Mapping:

Mapping a brilliant way of organising and learning information as I hope is demonstrated on various pages in this booklet. It helps you break down complex information, memorise it, and see the connections between different ideas.

Drawing:

This is about turning text into some form of drawing. Doing so involves you selecting, organising and integrating the information that matters, which forces you to think. This approach can be incorporated into the three strategies above too.

Self-Explaining:

Continually ask yourself ‘How?’ and ‘Why?’ when studying a topic and then try to provide answers to these questions. Doing so helps you to see connections and differences between ideas. Self-explaining can also involve you saying loud the steps you’re taking when solving a problem.

A recent analysis of 64 research studies showed that ‘it is better to ask a student to see if they can explain something to themselves, than for a teacher or book to always explain it to them’.

Flashcards:

Flashcards have the potential to be a very powerful learning aid. However, how successful this is will depend on the thought you put into making them in the first place and then how they’re used.



Mental Health Helplines and Charities:

- Samaritans. Samaritans provide 24-hour online and phone support to people in distress. Call: 116 123.
- Mind. Mind is a charity that provides advice and support for people experiencing a mental health problem in England and Wales. Call: 0300 123 3393 (Mon to Fri, 9am to 6pm)
- Rethink Mental Illness. Support and advice for people living with mental health problems. Call: 0300 5000 927 (Mon to Fri, 9.30am to 4pm)
- SANE. National out-of hours mental health charity offering emotional support, guidance and information. Call: 0300 304 7000 (4.30pm to 10.30pm)
- Mental Health Foundation. Information and support for anyone with mental health problems or learning disabilities.
- Childline. Support for people under 19 in the UK. Call: 0800 11 11
- Young Minds. Child and adolescent mental health charity. Call: 0808 802 5544 (parents' helpline)
- CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably). Charity dedicated to preventing male suicide. Call: 0800 58 58 58 (nationwide), 0808 802 58 58 (London)
- Papyrus Hopeline UK. Confidential support for young people struggling with suicidal thoughts



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