



WAYS YOU CAN HELP YOUR CHILD SUCCEED AT SCHOOL



SOUTH DARTMOOR ACADEMY





INTRODUCTION

As a parent or carer, you are your child's first and most important teacher.

Evidence shows that when a parent/carer is involved with their child's schooling, the child does better and has better feelings about going to school. In fact, this goes further. Studies have proven that when parents/carers and families are involved with their child's schooling, this has more success and impact than how much money a family has or indeed how much education a parent or carer has.

There are many ways in which a parent/carer can help their child at home and throughout the school year and beyond the school year.

Here are the top tips to help with this!



DEVELOP A PARTNERSHIP WITH YOUR CHILD'S TEACHERS & SCHOOL STAFF



Top
Tip 1

- Try and find a way to contact your child's teacher early on in the year. Focus on letting the teacher know you want to help your child learn at school and at home. Be open about being contacted about your child's progress.
- Get to know who is who at the school as all staff are at the school to support your child's learning and success. All schools will be different so make sure you know who the staff in each department are and who are the leadership team and who are the admin support staff.
- Attend all parents evenings or arrange to meet at another time. If this is impossible, email or arrange a phone call. It is really important for your child's progress that they receive feedback and see that teachers and parents both want them to be successful. This is best achieved when the child attends parents evening with their parent or carer.

SUPPORT YOUR CHILD'S LEARNING PROCESS

- Find out how your child is doing. This can be done through DC Reports which should always be reviewed but also through your links to staff. If you think your child is performing well, in any area, support this through praising the hard work that has been done.
- If you feel your child is coasting or not keeping up – act early! Early intervention is proven to be the most effective for improving progress. Contact the school.
- Make sure home learning is completed – regularly check Show My Homework. Let your child know that you think home learning is important and should be completed each day. Set aside a special space where this can be done and regular times for completion. Agree that no distractions such as TV or Social Media should be done during this regular completion time.

Top
Tip 2



SUPPORT YOUR CHILD'S LEARNING PROCESSES

- Find ways to help with homework if needed or encourage other help (contact school, after school clubs, lunch clubs or spaces, libraries, older students, other friends or experts). Some families support younger students with projects by creating research teams.
- Help with any preparation for tests. Find out about what is being tested. Do general quizzes together on TV – this supports on-going thinking and thinking under time pressure. Developing noticing habits daily and talking about their learning helps reduce the amount that needs revising.
- Apply for any additional support you think your child needs if you feel that your child needs support learning. What is important is that your child has the education they need to be successful.
- Packing their bag in good time or the evening before to avoid the morning rush. Eating properly at regular times (breakfast, lunch, dinner). Allow time to get to school in good time to reduce stress and give daily settling in time.

How much HW a day?
45-90 minutes in Year 7 & 8.
60-120 minutes in Year 9;
90-150 minutes in Years 10 & 11



GET INVOLVED AT YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL



**Top
Tip 3**

- Always read communications from the school. Check each day if a letter has gone home. What is on offer? Encourage your child to be fully involved with school clubs, teams, events, trips and then support these. Many successful students have parents who are known and visible at school – for example at concerts, shows, matches and so on. This way they are building strong relationships with teachers and staff and supporting their child by supporting additional learning and progress.
- Volunteer to help*. Could you support front of house or refreshments at a concert or show? Or support reading or in the library? Or at lunchtimes? Could you pro-actively fund-raise or run a parents council? Or become a parent governor?

* Some of these would require a DBS check.

BE INFORMED AND ACT AS A VOICE FOR YOUR CHILD WHEN NECESSARY

- Ask questions. Usually schools have good reasons for making decisions but do ask for clarification if you are unsure. Seek advice.
- Understand the things that schools have to do by government policy such as subjects that have to be taught.
- Always let the school know of any concerns.
- Keep the school informed if a child is unable to make a regular commitment out of classes – usually these extra opportunities are offered voluntarily by the teachers and letting the teacher know of planned absences strengthens the relationship being developed.

Top
Tip 4



SUPPORT LEARNING AT HOME



Top Tip 5



- Have a positive attitude towards education in front of your child. Children pick up on attitudes and mirror models provided. Valuing education openly at home and being enthusiastic about school and learning can spark enthusiasm from your child and lead to better progress and success. This is a very powerful model.
- Show interest in their interests – this will promote further learning and success and rewards for everyone.
- Monitor TV, Social Media usage – these are important and powerful modern day tools but overuse is damaging. There are very many studies that show increased stress related to these overused tools especially when used all the time or late in the evening.

SUPPORT LEARNING AT HOME



Top Tip 5



- Encourage reading. The importance of this cannot be overstated. This is where students see written models and develop depth of language. Encourage library use – this supports independent learning and research.
- Talking with your child about a wide range of things, using a range of language. Talking supports understanding, listening and reading. Talk about what you see – sight is massively important in learning more. This also encourages the expectation that they can talk too, and share with you issues if they occur. They know they'll be listened to. Always show interest in what they say and develop conversation.
- Encourage and support independence and responsibility. These will be needed to be fully successful at school and in life. Show how a child can break processes down into smaller steps, support monitoring of this but also encourage them to self monitor. Agree rules and responsibilities. Share plans for activities, trips, nights at friends, nights when you are out.



Exploring Interests

Visiting an event

Going to a museum



South Dartmoor Academy

And finally, encourage active learning. Active learning as well as quiet learning is key to building confidence which supports progress which supports success. Listen to your child's ideas and act on them. Allow creative thinking. Increased participation does result in increased progress at school.

Solving Problems

Being in a Show

Asking Questions



Being in a Team



Asking Questions

Solving Problems

Spending time with friends

Exploring Interests

Playing Sport

Playing a musical instrument



SUPPORT LEARNING AT HOME

- Educational Days Out – explore new places, go to a different town shopping. Plan these in advance and together; don't overload a day with too many activities.
- Learning Together - explore a brand new activity, play games together, do a crossword or quiz; have things ready for rainy days.
- Schools follow the government's curriculum, so holidays shouldn't. Let your child choose the curriculum – things they love and find inspiring. Try Theme days or weeks.
- Include books and quiet play in the holiday – this develops the imagination and independence. There doesn't always have to be a planned activity.
- Create a summer logbook or journal where they keep pictures, tickets, write stories, keep a diary. This could be electronic but a hard copy can end up being a lifelong keepsake and memory.
- In Year 11, some holiday time will be used by successful students to make a difference to outcomes. The summer before Year 11 is a great time to complete coursework or revise key topics; Easter is definitely the time to start revising so plan this in advance of the Easter holiday. Use May Half Term wisely to re-energise but also to revise carefully.

ALSO TRY 1: HOLIDAYS

Holiday time can be a valuable learning time – this isn't school learning but a time for a variety of activity – this can be quiet learning as well as active.



- Experts say that sleep is essential for brain development.
- Experts say that it is essential for children to sleep to develop brain functions and ensure body growth – it is during sleep that teenagers release hormones that support growth during puberty.
- Experts say the right amount of sleep is important and that it must include high quality REM sleep. This is the brain's cleaning up time and it needs sleep to function well.
- Experts say that sleep also impacts on daytime functioning including concentration, behaviour, emotional response, memory, motor control – all really important for learning! Poor or too little sleep will result in lower outcomes at school.
- Experts say that the right amount of sleep is as important for health as healthy eating and regular exercise.
- Experts say that a child aged 11-18 should sleep between 8.5-10 hours a night. Even older children need this and need a regular bedtime.
- Experts say lack of sleep can result in eating disorders as the hormone for appetite control is produced during good sleep. This can result in gaining or losing weight.
- Experts say that the person sleeping often doesn't spot patterns of sleep, so do talk to your child about this and if they awake still tired, suggest earlier bedtimes, no eating before sleeping, no mobile technology use for at least 3 hours prior to sleep! Older children can still like an end of day chat so make this a routine to support earlier bedtimes.
- Experts say that in the summer, lighter evenings can encourage later bedtimes – this is not good for sleep; try finding black out curtains, or black out blinds that supports darkness in the bedroom.

ALSO TRY 2: IS SLEEP IMPORTANT?

How many hours sleep should your child be getting and why is it so important?



- The secret of doing well in exams is to be well-prepared and to plan. Well-prepared means working throughout the whole school life – Years 7-11! The vast majority of students do this all the time. How far behind a child can be could simply be the result of being lazy in Years 7 and 8 - they work hard in Year 10 and 11 but always feel they are behind. Catch up can be stressful!
- Planning is important. Work out a clear schedule of revision with your child, with clear dates and times. Look at exam dates and work backwards – how much time is really needed to be well-prepared? Work out a schedule for every subject – do not prioritise subjects, this simply means that your child is preparing to under-perform. Starting to revise earlier is the answer.
- Encourage your child to break revision into varied chunks – clear breaks, clear learning lengths.
- Work out what your child needs to revise – ask your child to check over all work but focus on areas that are less well remembered.
- Ensure that your child has all the books and notes needed. Contact school for help if anything is missing.
- Help them find a revision method that works – there are many different strategies.
- Buy new pens, stationery for your child to make revision more exciting.
- Go over notes with your child. Help with their revision method. Don't force a revision method that works for you if it adds to their stress or doesn't work for them.
- Help your child with timed answers practise.
- SUPPORT, SUPPORT, SUPPORT! You are their number 1 fan at the most stressful time imaginable to a teenager! A calm and happy home environment, being at home to support, making others aware of the pressure your child is under, stocking up on snacks and nutritious food and drink all helps. Including your busy child at meal times is essential – they must re-energise and relax – easier if this is built into the revision plan! Encourage a get out and walk or exercise moment for your child.
- Encourage change of scene for your child – computer to book to notes to memory work rather than one diet all the time.
- Avoid conflict – they will get irritable and tired!
- Good sleep before an exam is as important as ever. As is a good breakfast. Encourage this.
- Bribes and rewards for exam results are counter-productive as they suggest that they will only work for reward or that you don't trust them to work hard. Encourage them to work hard for their own sake and own success and that good results are the reward – they will feel so good when they are successful on their own motivation. Treats to reward hard work are fine if done as a surprise!

ALSO TRY 3: HELPING YOUR CHILD THROUGH EXAMS

There's no getting away from them
– exams are stressful for everyone!
How can you help?

