



## PARENT GUIDE

### Supporting your son with study skills and exam preparation



Academic success in secondary school requires several elements to be in place. Regular attendance, good punctuality, adherence to school rules, and consistent attention to homework, are the basics needed for a smooth progression in secondary school. However, experience shows, year in and year out, that it is a mistake to assume that once all of the above are in place that success is guaranteed. Something extra is needed.....**STUDY!**

Study is often viewed as work carried out in the run up to exams, which may be a flawed view of study. Study is for students to **consistently undertake** throughout the school year and not just in the final run up to an exam.

For a student to be able to say that they have done their best – regardless of the grades obtained – that student needs to have a **weekly routine of study** throughout the academic year.

Moreover, whatever year your son is currently in, it is useful to **project ahead to 6<sup>th</sup> year** to see the **habits** of a successful 6<sup>th</sup> year student. They have a weekly routine throughout the academic year that consists of:

- Keeping up to date with current homework
- Studying 6<sup>th</sup> year material that was taught in the earlier part of 6<sup>th</sup> year and studying old 5<sup>th</sup> year material

Habits do not suddenly switch themselves on, they evolve over time, that is from 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> years. Therefore, the earlier in the Junior Cycle years that habits are formed, the greater the chance these habits will be implemented in the Senior Cycle.

Following are suggestions for focus areas and habit-forming activities for each year group and a link to further information from the Institute of Guidance Counsellors.

#### First Year

In first year, the focus is to guide students in developing practical techniques to assist them in settling into secondary school and to gain insight into techniques and tools that will help them learn better. The Guidance Department will be meeting with all first year classes the week starting the 6<sup>th</sup> of December to give them some practical study skills and exam strategies to help them prepare for their upcoming Christmas exams. The three key areas which are the main focus in first year are:

- Transitioning and settling in
- What learning is all about
- Managing information

Please follow the link to a Study guide for 1st year – [1st Year Study Guidelines](#)

## **Second Year**

In second year, students engage more fully in the learning process. They build on the skills they learned in 1st year and will explore how and why the student should set goals for their Junior Cycle. They are presented with a study system that will support them throughout the junior cycle. This explores:

- The student as a learner
- Goals and Motivation for learning
- Memory and Study

Please follow the link to a study guide for 2nd year – [2nd year Study Guidelines](#)

## **Third Year**

The Guidance Department have already delivered study skills workshops to all third year classes, the week after the October Mid-Term break. During these sessions, we covered the following topics: organising your study, study methods, and exam technique.

This year focuses on preparing students for assessments. Students explore simple strategies that will help them manage the pressure they feel as they sit their first state exam.

- Purpose of assessment
- How to develop resilience as a learner
- Exam preparation

Please follow the link to study guide for 3rd year – [3rd Year Study Guidelines](#)

## **Fifth Year**

All 5th year students are dealing with the step up to Senior Cycle and the Leaving Certificate. Now is a time to place a strong emphasis on the students learning to think, act and study independently. The following themes are important at this stage:

- Efficient Learning – Core strategies to aid learning and revision; the optimum learning environment, note taking, and memory recall
- Marginal Gains – Strategies to improve personal performance; collaboration, problem solving, research skills and time management tools
- Mindset Matters – Examining ability beliefs and approaches to challenges
- The Malleable Brain – The basics of brain biology and its link to learning; the differences in storage and retrieval strength in memory and why multisensory learning is important.

It is also important at this stage for the student to become aware of:

**Learning Approaches** and the various learning styles so as to become more efficient in how they learn

**Learning Skills** introducing the importance of why they need to be well organised and prepared for Senior Cycle. Students will be introduced to the concept of exam target setting, study skills, goal setting and study behaviour.

**Exam Targets** and the understanding of the importance of setting exam targets. They will then review subjects, their levels and begin to set their targets for the next school assessment.

**Study Skills** review current practices to help measure their performance on a number of key study habits and routine.

**Study Action Plan** use tips and hints to decide on what changes they can realistically make to improve their study performance.

Please follow the link to a study guide for 5th year – [5th Year Study Guidelines](#)

### **Sixth Year**

All 6th year students have attended a study skills seminar (prior to the October Mid-Term break) to refresh their learning/study skills. Topics which were covered during this workshop were:

- Self-Belief & Success Visualisation.
- Revision Strategies relevant to student learning preferences.
- Exam Techniques.
- Planning and Time Management.
- Physiological and Psychological preparation in the run up to exams and coping with anxiety/stress.

Please follow the link to a study guide for 6th year – [6th Year Study Guidelines](#)

### **Additional resources**

[Study skills parent guide](#)

[Study Skills video, First things first](#)

[Study Skills workbook](#)

[Study tips for students with dyslexia](#)

[6 reasons to put your phone away](#)

[How to make a study plan](#)

[Phone Management ebook](#)

[How to Study](#)

[Careersportal website: Study Skills](#)

[Study website: StudyClix](#)

[Wikipedia to study](#)

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