



## The Headmaster's Revision Guide

House programmes will often describe the kitchen as the 'heart of the home'. The heart of the home, wherever it is for you will be where the support is for your son as he embarks on his revision programme.

What do I see in your kitchen?

**A 'keep calm and revise' cake tin?** Full of coffee and walnut cake. Homemade biscuits. Tins of upmarket coffee or maybe even a new little espresso machine. Or maybe little packs of dried fruit, which many tell me can sustain them through the day.

**A tray?** This carries your son's favourite mug and a nice plate to house the cake or the biscuits. The tray gets taken, at regular intervals, to where your son is working by you or an uncharacteristically helpful brother or sister.

**The fridge door?** Using magnetic memorabilia of a childhood holiday is affixed your son's revision and examination timetable. The revision timetable has distinct slots for catching up sessions, slots for treats (a weekly cinema or theatre visit, perhaps a musical or a sporting event?). The family all realise that exams are a 'family affair' and know that revision cannot be relentless. However, they also realise that the timetables are there to support, not to allow parents to 'helicopter' the revision process unnecessarily.

**Hot desk?** It may be that the kitchen table sometimes becomes the place to work, your son having tired of his bedroom or your workspace. Perhaps a lift to your local library (if there is one!) or into school may give productive respite from noisy siblings!

**Mum and Dad's contactless cards?** These may be 'contactlessing' more than usual due to their financing a new set of pens and stationery. Not breaking the bank, but as a kind gesture, perhaps also subsidising their son's buying a few treats.

**The family notice board?** Jam packed with appointments, siblings' sporting fixtures, parents' evenings, etc. Pride of place, however, are those tickets for a special treat once the exams are over.

**The family wifi?** This has developed a fault and switches itself off now and again. I found this wonderful limerick:

*There once was a boy named Divine (apologies for the name but it's designed to rhyme)  
Whose friends were forever online  
So to aid with his studies  
He told all his buddies  
He'd be switched off from seven until nine*

**The back door?** Not an escape route but a door of opportunity which opens to fresh air. By the door is a pair of trainers, a pair of jogging bottoms and a sports shirt (neatly placed of course). In gothic italics, Dad has a motto inscribed above the door 'mens sana in corpore sano' (healthy body, healthy mind).

**The landline 'phone and family PC?** They act as the 'batphone' between home and RGS, safe in the knowledge that your son's teachers are there to help.

**The salt pot?** A reminder that what is written above may need a large pinch of its contents. Seasoning is very much about personal taste. So is a revision programme - what works for one family may not work for another - which will need adjusting according to characteristics of the family.

Finally... Few students like exams. Our heart of the home will expect times of worry, concern and possibly an uncharacteristic outburst occasionally. However, this warm room is a place of trust, love, sympathy and support.

*(The gist and content of this article is not entirely original, but adapted to suit our own school.)*

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