



St Martin's

Student Wellbeing and Support

Booklet 2019-2020



<https://www.stmartins.caerphilly.sch.uk/page/?title=Sixth+form&pid=28>



St Martin's Wellbeing

Teaching and Learning at St Martin's

At St. Martin's we have developed an exciting learning community where we aspire to maximise the learning potential of every pupil; the learners are centrally positioned within our school and are at the heart of everything we do. In fostering and nurturing our pupils' aspirations we enable them to achieve successful futures; they begin to realise their capabilities and extend ambitions beyond their own horizons.

We have the highest expectations of all pupils and our creative learning environments enable pupils to learn with passion, enthusiasm and motivation.

In developing the key skills of our pupils we ensure that they are fully equipped for the ever changing demands of the 21st Century.

At St. Martin's our supportive yet challenging learning culture enables our pupils to develop independence and autonomy in learning. With our guidance they are prepared for exciting futures and equipped with the skills as lifelong learners.

<https://www.stmartins.caerphilly.sch.uk/page/?title=Teaching+and+Learning+%5BDysgu+ac+Addysgu%5D&pid=9>

Values & Ethos

As a school we want every single learner to achieve their absolute best in all areas, leaving them well prepared for their life ahead.

Our community is a place where we:

- Strive for success
- Try hard and never give up
- Make the most of every opportunity to learn
- Are happy and caring
- Respect everyone and behave well
- Take care of our environment and community
- Inspire and aspire to be our best
- Nurture others
- Show pride in our achievements and celebrate success

<https://www.stmartins.caerphilly.sch.uk/page/?title=Values+%26amp%3B+Ethos+%5BGwerthoedd+%26amp%3B+Ethos%5D&pid=12>



Inspection Reports

St Martin's received an excellent Estyn inspection report in May 2019.

<https://www.stmartins.caerphilly.sch.uk/page/?title=Inspection+Reports+%5BAadroddiadau+arolygu%5D&pid=16>

St Martin's Policies

Safeguarding

Students

Your safety and wellbeing are very important to us. We firmly believe that you have the right to be happy and safe inside and outside of school. That's why there are lots of things we do as staff and with you as students to try to make this happen.

All staff are trained to look out for you and to listen if you wish to share a concern about yourself or someone else. We cannot, however, promise to keep what you tell us a secret but we will always only pass it on to other people who need to know and can help.

St Martin's Safeguarding Officer is Mrs E Watt and deputy safeguarding officer is Mr M Yeoman, who is also Deputy Headteacher. The School Governor responsible for Safeguarding is Colin Elsbury.

It is really important for you to know how to keep yourself safe and healthy. As young people you have the right to enjoy yourselves, use the internet and form relationships if you wish, but you also have the responsibility to do all of this in a safe way. Issues such as online safety, bullying and sexual health are particularly significant for young people and it's really important that you know how to keep yourself and others safe.

<https://www.stmartins.caerphilly.sch.uk/page/?title=Safeguarding+%5BDiogelu%5D&pid=1148>

<https://www.stmartins.caerphilly.sch.uk/page/?title=Policies+%26amp%3B+Documents+%5BPolisiau+%26amp%3B+Dogfennau%5D&pid=15>



Pastoral care

St Martin's is committed to your safety and wellbeing. We have dedicated staff members for you to talk to including the sixth form team, careers advisor, form tutors and nurture team. We also have a compulsory Core Skills lesson daily for you to attend to discuss any issues and receive further support, guidance and advice. We aim to provide quality pastoral care, which focuses on the whole student including; personal, social and academic. Remember no issue is too small, so we encourage our students to talk to us.

University/College/Employment

It is important for students to know each University, College, and Company have a Human Resources and/or Wellbeing department to take care of students and employees. Some examples are below:

Cardiff University Example:

- <https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/study/student-life/student-support/counselling-and-wellbeing>
- <https://www.cardiffstudents.com/advice/health-and-wellbeing/mental-health/>

Admiral Group plc Example:

- <https://admiralgroup.co.uk/our-culture/ministry-health>



Stress Management: Coping Techniques

Often students worry about the feeling of being examined and the consequences of not reaching their aspired grade or failing, affecting future options. This can lead to feeling stressed and overwhelmed, which stops us from performing to our best ability. This can affect your sleep, appetite and mood. Worrying through negative and anxious thoughts affects your study mode.

However, there are ways to decrease and avoid these feelings of stress, worry and anxiety:

- **Talk to someone:** This can help clear your mind and feelings, by expressing how you feel.
- ❖ You could talk to a friend, someone who is going through the same motions as you. You will be surprised, more than likely they are feeling the exact same way. Perhaps, organise relaxation times, where you unwind by going to the cinema, or out for a coffee or food or simply talking about your favourite TV show.
- ❖ Talking to a parent or guardian can help too. They are there to support you and help guide you during this time.
- ❖ Talk to one of our staff members at school. We have dedicated members of staff to help you during your A-levels, through exams, work experience, university application process and after A-levels. You are provided with a support network to help you relieve stress and keep things in perspective.
- **Be prepared:** Start your revision early, the worst thing you can do when important exams are coming up is leave everything to the last minute. Always set aside plenty of time to revise, this will allow you time to go over everything you need to, in particular any elements you do not fully understand. If you do not understand something, seek guidance from your teachers and ask plenty of questions.
- **Take a break:** Ensure you are taking time out from studying and revision. This will help you to refresh your mind and provide you with more energy and concentration. Aim to have breaks in between each topic and subject. When you are not revising, do activities that are away from your study area, go for a walk, go to the shops, or perhaps meet a friend.
- **Self-Care:** Provide yourself with a self-care routine. This will allow to feel productive, take care of yourself and place you in a positive mode.
- **Your Own Pace:** Work to your own pace. Everyone is different in how they work and how they study. Some people are early birds and some are night owls, some are in-between. Do not feel pressurised by anyone to follow what they do if it does not work for you.
- **Keep focused** – It is easy to feel overwhelmed and lose track of your workload. Take time to sit and write your workload, categorise and prioritise. Aim to do this on a weekly basis by creating a timetable of your revision. Change subject after a few hours of studying to keep your brain alert and fresh.
- **Get plenty of sleep:** Aim to get into a routine by attaining a full night's sleep each night at the same time. By adjusting your body clock into a routine each day, it will allow you to feel the benefits of long term concentration, improved memory and increased energy levels. Therefore, leading to a healthier lifestyle.



- **Eat well:** Ensure you are having regular healthy meals is important. This way you will have more energy for longer which allows you to study with more ease and is great for your health.
- **Do not compare yourself with others:** Focus on yourself and your goals and do what works for you. Trying to compare will only add more stress, remember you are all on different paths and do things at different paces.
- **Focus on Now:** Focus on the now. Do not overthink the past or worry about the future. The past cannot be changed and the future can be dealt with after exams. Focus on the now, take it day by day, hour by hour or subject by subject.
- **Learn to recognise your triggers and symptoms:** It is important to know when you are beginning to feel stressed or anxious. If you feel uncomfortable, struggling to concentrate, struggling to sleep, feeling sick, suffer with headaches, mood swings and are over thinking. Pause and take a break. It is important to not overdo it as this will lead to a drop in concentration and energy levels, which leads to unproductive study time, and will therefore, cause further stress later on.
- **Deal with problems on the spot.** Do not wait for problems to build up and bottle up your feelings as this will weaken your sense of control. Deal with problems as soon as possible to remove negativity and allow yourself to move on peacefully.
- **Slow Down.** Do not be tempted to do things at 100 miles an hour. Eat, walk and drive more slowly. It is ok to spread out your tasks, there is always another day.
- **Divide up problems.** If you face a big problem, divide it up and tackle issues one at a time. Overloading makes things harder to deal with.
- **Prioritise.** Prioritising will allow you to be more productive. Place your priorities in an order, this can be done with anything. Set your revision timetable, subject and timings that you aim to get it done by. E.g. Maths Algebra 9-12pm. 12-1pm Lunch break. 1-3pm English, read chapter 5 etc.
- **Do the worst task first.** Often doing the hardest task first is the best way. You can get it out of the way and focus on your other tasks which will seem a lot simpler and you will feel at ease.
- **Keep up a routine.** Try your best to keep structure in your day and week. It may seem tiring at first, but it will soon become a normality. Avoid having too many late nights as this will lead to a late morning, which affects the rest of the day. Keeping a structure will help you hold back the problems.



Goal Setting

Set yourself realistic goals and be honest with yourself about your abilities. Pace yourself throughout your A-levels and perhaps write out yearly, monthly, weekly and daily action plans to help keep you focused and on track. This will allow to prioritise and categorise what you need to do without feeling overwhelmed, leading to you being a lot more productive. You can use the 'SMART GOALS' technique to help you achieve this.

Specific – What are you going to do?

Measurable – How will you know you've done it?

Achievable – Be kind to yourself. Is it realistic?

Relevant – Choose a goal that matters.

Timely – Give yourself a deadline.

Useful Links:

We have created a list of links below where students can contact via phone, app, email or web chat, and can learn coping techniques to help you through these difficult times.

- **Managing Stress** <https://www.whatuni.com/advice/wellbeing/5-ways-to-manage-sixth-form-stress/69492/>
- **Advice for Sixth Formers** <https://www.oxford-royale.com/articles/top-advice-sixth-formers.html#ald=614b5b1f-4fef-4a91-a16f-3d8ce467b41d>
- **How to stay motivated?** <https://www.ucas.com/connect/blogs/dealing-stress-how-stay-motivated>
- **Health and Wellbeing** <https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/student-life/getting-student-support/health-and-wellbeing>
- **Self Help Tips** <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/student-stress/>
- **Student Mental Health** <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/student-mental-health/>
- **Exam Stress** <https://www.studentminds.org.uk/examstress.html>
- **Student Mental Health** <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/student-life/#.XZcok0ZKiM8>
- **Kooth** <https://www.kooth.com/>
- **The Mix** <https://www.themix.org.uk/>



Study and Revision Guidance

Different Subjects may require different learning styles and techniques. For example, some exams are based on past papers, others on multiple choice, others on factual question and answer. Do not feel the need to study the same way as others as everyone is different. Below are some techniques which may help you in your studies:

Study Techniques

- **Utilise your surroundings to help you revise.** For instance, hang up notes and posters around your bedroom so it becomes repetitive and familiar. Each time you open your wardrobe, or a drawer or open the fridge, place a revision note for you to read. This will become repetitive and therefore more memorable.
- **Writing precise summaries.** Summaries are made to be short and concise, for a quick and easy read. Ensure you are being precise in what you are writing, so if anyone read it, it would provide them with an overall picture of what you are trying to explain.
- **Rehearse work with a friend.** Whether you are studying the same or different subjects both have benefits. If you are studying the same subject, you can help each other out with anything you may be struggling with. If you study different subjects, practice explaining your revision notes to your friend. Remember they have no idea what you are studying so by the end of the session they should understand your subject topic.
- **Study with a definite goal or task in mind.** Set yourself goals and sub goals through each revision session. If you are struggling with a particular chapter or question, make that the focus of your revision session and set a goal to have it figured out by the end.
- **Use flashcards.** A really effective strategy is to use flashcards where you can write specific but brief notes. Write your subject and topic area. Colour coding and diagrams are very effective as it allow your brain to recognise the colours and diagrams which allows you to remember. (You can buy flashcards for approximately £3 on Amazon)
- **Use Mind-Maps.** Mind maps allow for a more visual way of revising, especially with colour and diagrams. Write the topic title in the middle and branch out sub topics in different colours. Ensure key words, phrases, formulas etc. stand out. And ensure any links between the branches stand out too. The following links may be useful to create mind maps:
<https://www.mindmapping.com/> and <https://bubbl.us/>.
- **Revision Timetable.** Ensure you make a revision time table on a weekly basis to plan your week. This will allow to be more productive and feel less overwhelmed. You can print a timetable or create one yourself. You can use a diary, put it in your phone or computer.



- **Acronyms-** A great revision and memory techniques is using acronyms. Acronyms are created by using the first letters of a series of words. You can post these acronyms on post it notes around you to help you remember. They are an effective way of summarising a lot of information in a very concise form.
 - Example: You may need to bring your **K**it, **L**unch, **C**alculator, **B**ook, **T**rip money, **I**ndex cards, **O**utdoor shoes which can be made into the acronym **BLOCK IT**.
- **Exam Board Websites.** Explore your exam board website for resources such as past papers, books, study guides and materials. Many of these can be accessed without needing an account. Some even offer the mark scheme with suggestions of what should be included in your answers and information on grade boundaries.
- **Learn from your Mock results.** Learning from your performance in your mock exams is a great way of understanding where to improve. You may identify where there may be gaps in your subject knowledge and may be issues with your timings with answering the question on time and having time to check your answers. Use this review to outline where you need to focus in revision sessions and ask your teacher for guidance too. They may be able to provide you with extra advice and further practice questions.
- **Revision Timetable.** Ensure you make a revision timetable on a weekly basis to plan your week. This will allow to be more productive and feel less overwhelmed. You can print a timetable out line or create one yourself. You can use a diary, put it in your phone or computer.
- **Note taking.** Taking notes forces you to listen and test your understanding of the material. Personal notes are often easier to remember as they are in your own wording and how you interpret them leading to your understanding of them. Do not be tempted to copy others' notes. Please see note taking presentation for further information.
- **Time Management.** Time management is crucial in your school life, work life, social life, revision and exams and leads to the balance of all. If you can manage your time correctly, you will be more productive and less stressed. Please see time management presentation for further information.

What to Avoid:

- **Late nights,** especially closer to your exams. It may only be one time, but your body has to compensate and make up for lost sleep which uses up energy and fuel.
- **Negative foods:** Sugar and Caffeine only provide you with short term energy. Instead have slow release energy food such as oats, banana, nuts and pulses, fruits, vegetables and water. These foods also keep you fuller for longer.
- **Avoid Alcohol and Nicotine** as they over stimulate and produce highs and lows that lead to distress, especially in excess. This leaves an imbalance in your body.
- **Avoid Passive Revision.** Passively reading through notes is a poor method of revision and is very ineffective in helping students to understand or remember. Revision is most productive and effective when started early and allowing information to soak in over time.



Breathing Exercises

It is important to manage your stress levels when you feel it is overwhelming and affecting you and your studies. There are various techniques on how to manage stress. Breathing exercises is one technique. Breathing helps to slow down or even stop the stress response. Often, people do not learn how to breathe correctly, and do not use it consistently:

1. Sit in a comfortable position and relax as much as you can.
2. Slowly inhale counting one, pause for a moment and slowly exhale counting two.
3. Slowly inhale counting three, pause for a moment and slowly exhale counting four.
4. Slowly inhale counting up to seven, pause for a moment and slowly exhale counting eight.
5. Try to feel the cool air as you inhale and the warmth of your breath as you exhale.
6. You may repeat this for another four breaths.



This will allow your mind and body to focus on breathing only.



What is Mindfulness and how can mindfulness help you?

More than ever, people are talking about mindfulness. But what is it and how could it help you? Mindfulness can help all students (struggling or not) be more productive. Mindfulness can help you manage your wellbeing and mental health. It can enable you to:

- Feel less overwhelmed
- Improve your sleep quality
- Positively change the way you think and feel about your experiences (especially stressful experiences)
- Increase your ability to manage difficult situations
- Make wiser choices
- Reduce levels of anxiety
- Reduce levels of depression
- Reduce levels of stress
- Reduce the amount you chew things over in your mind
- Have greater self-compassion
- Increase emotional resilience
- Improve focus and concentration
- Improves memory
- Increases creativity and reaction times become faster
- A powerful tool

There are three different techniques below which may work for you:

<http://mindfulnessforstudents.co.uk/resources/the-body-scan//>

<http://mindfulnessforstudents.co.uk/resources/puppy-mind//>

<http://mindfulnessforstudents.co.uk/exams-coming-up-feeling-under-pressure-try-this-two-minute-stress-buster/>

Top universities like the University of Cambridge offer mindfulness training for their students, where their studies have shown it helps build resilience in students and improve their mental health.

There are lots of online resources and apps like Headspace or Stop, Breathe and Think and are great tools for simple guided meditations.

For further information:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mindfulness/>





Parents Support (working together-school, parent and students)

At St Martin's we aim to work together with parents, students and the school to provide the best support for our students. We update parents via website, email, letters and through the students where communication is key. Parents are more than welcome to call the Sixth Form team for discussions.

Supporting your child through exams

Parents play a key role in helping their children consider their choices after A-level.

Exams can be a stressful time, but there are things you can do to help your child:

- Having someone for your child to talk to can help share their worries and place things into perspective.
- Ensuring your child is eating healthy meals on a regular basis. This helps to fuel their brain, provide them with energy to concentrate and study.
- Ensuring your child is getting a full night's sleep, with less use of TV and mobile phones, to help recharge themselves.
- Be flexible during exam periods, with household chores. Refrain from adding any pressure and avoid criticism on your child during this time, as this can lead to stress.
- Help your child with their studies. Perhaps through question and answer rounds, or placing revision notes around the house.
- Reassure your child that they do not need to stress, but to do the best they can do and that this is all that matters.
- Provide your child with the space they need to work. A clean, spacious and quiet environment often works best.
- Encourage your child to take breaks and relax. Especially if they have been studying for a long period of time.
- Help them prepare for their exams. Ensure they have breakfast, lunch, snacks and drinks. This is in order to keep them fuelled, hydrated and calm. Make a list of everything they will need on the day and go through it with them the night before.
- Motivate your child as this can help with self-confidence.
- Plan a treat for your child to motivate them and reward them for their hard work.



Please see the link below which offers practical advice and information on stress and well-being during exam periods:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/coping-with-exam-stress/>