

24<sup>th</sup> March 2017

Ready. Steady. Revise.

When I was in the 5<sup>th</sup> Form, about to break up for the Easter holidays, I knew I needed to knuckle down, get my head in my books and crack on with some revision for my GCSEs. So after school I caught the bus to the John Menzies on Queen St, bought an armful of new stationery and sat down to draw up a revision wall chart. It was the best looking, brightest and boldest, and alas, the most unrealistic timetable the world had ever seen. Eight hours of scheduled work every day for three weeks solid, with very little in the way of breaks built in, it's little wonder that half way through the first day I was lolling on my bed reading *Marie-Claire* and eating a Caramac, never to return to my tightly planned time slots of Algebra, Periodic Table and German oral practice.

Our current students are rather more prepared, and whether they are sitting school exams, GCSEs or A-levels this summer, will have been given plenty of advice on what to revise, how to go about it and how to resist the temptations of the phone next to them on their desk. For parents, though, it can be hard to know how much – or how little – to get involved. On Women's Hour on Radio 4 this week, two 16-year-olds and their mothers shared their experiences of the GCSE season last year. So, some suggestions from Megan, Max and their mums, which may mean your Easter break goes more smoothly:

- Don't Put On Additional Pressure. They know you want them to do well, don't keep on about it!
- Get Things In Perspective. This generation will live into their 90s, they will probably have six or seven different jobs, most of which haven't been invented yet.
- Keep Calm. Make home life as calm and pleasant as possible. It helps if other members of the household are aware that your child may be under pressure and that allowances should be made for this.
- Be There In The Background. Try to be at home as much as possible during study leave, so that you can share a break and a chat together.

Strangely, not one of them mentioned highlighter pens and coloured stickers. More fool them, they were clearly the secret to my success.