Family Support During Year 12

There is no doubt that Year 12 can be a demanding, sometimes stressful, but also very exciting year for both students and parents. You may have been through it yourself, or with other children, or this may be a whole new experience for you. You may be unsure about your role. You may have heard the buzz phrase ‘parental engagement’, but what does this actually look like in action during Year 12?

Why does it matter?

Contemporary research on this subject is very informative. It tells us clearly that how parents engage with their children’s education is important. Your attitudes and actions make a real difference – not only to your children’s learning and academic results, but also to their development and sense of wellbeing.

Some do’s and don’ts

You have an important role as a collaborator and a motivator. Never forget the value of this role. Have high expectations about your children’s education, and encourage them to do their best. Nurture their hopes and dreams. Encourage them to make plans for the future.

Think about how you can most usefully contribute to this year. What skills, abilities and time do you have to offer?

But also a word of caution! While your Year 12 children will value your support and encouragement, they are also at a stage of developing their independence and wanting to make their own decisions.

A supportive parenting style sets some boundaries and rules – but it is also open to discussing these, and to acknowledge the child’s growing independence and self-responsibility. Encourage your children to set their own goals, assess the consequences of their actions, and learn from their successes and failures.

And remember that excessive pressure can have a detrimental effect on your child’s sense of wellbeing and self-esteem.
Some practical tips

- Talk regularly to your child about the value and enjoyment of learning. Talk to them about what they are learning.
- Make connections between their schoolwork and what is happening in the wider world.
- Familiarise yourself with the expectations of the subjects and any other courses your child is undertaking, including homework schedules and dates for assignments and exams.
- Discuss the learning strategies that seem to work best for different subjects.
- Ensure your child has a place where they can study away from distractions and where they can have their computer, notes and books. Tolerate a bit of mess here if necessary!
- Take up all opportunities to meet with your child’s teachers, SACE Coordinator, and/or career counsellor to discuss their progress and to set or review goals for their learning.
- Understand that assignment deadlines and exams may disrupt family routines and household chores. Be flexible.
- Discuss strategies for balancing study, work, social activities and exercise. Acknowledge and support their need for ‘downtime’ including social time with their peers.
- Look out for signs that your child may be having trouble coping and consider accessing school-based or other support services if necessary (e.g. counselling, tutoring, advice for developing effective study skills or online resources such as www.headspace.org.au/)
- Let your child know you are proud of the effort they are putting in and what they are achieving.
- Acknowledge and celebrate their successes – often!

So what do Year 12 students themselves think about all this? Well, the Federation decided to find out. Check out our resources in our “Be Informed” section to read this information.