

AN EXAM MARKER'S
SECRETS FOR BETTER

NCEA RESULTS

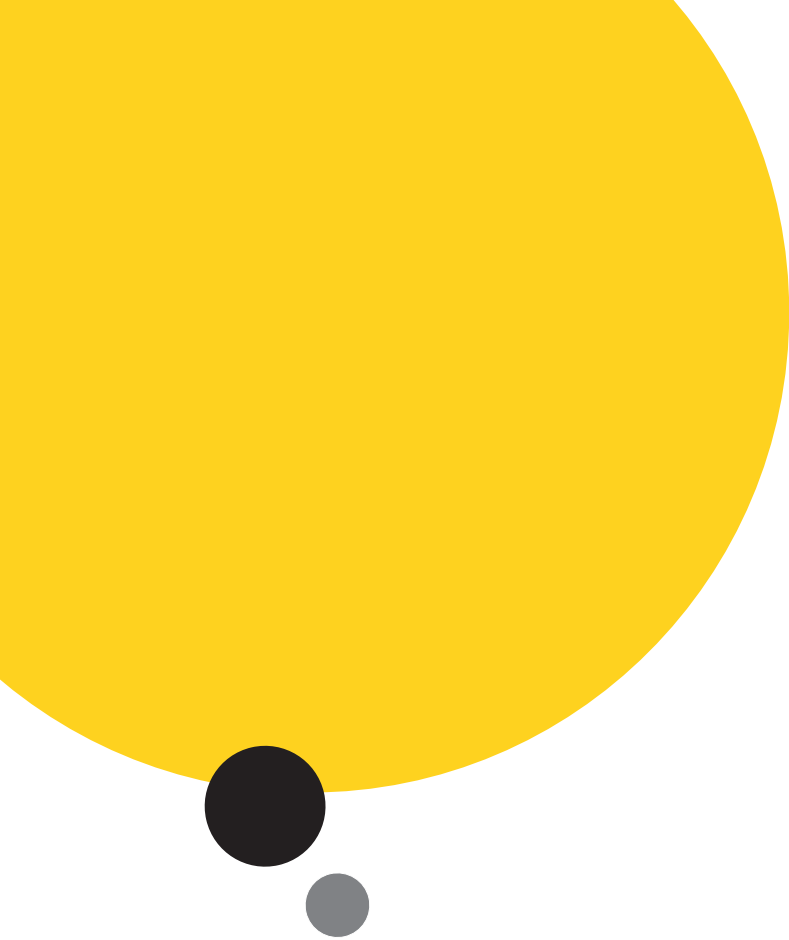




Peter Hampton has worked in the education industry for more than 30 years. He is an NCEA curriculum writer who is currently working alongside the Ministry of Education to implement new teaching and learning material (Agribusiness) at NCEA Levels 2 and 3 for all New Zealand secondary schools. This book includes his advice and secrets for students to achieve their personal best in the classroom and NCEA.

IN THIS GUIDE, WE EXPLAIN:

- 1 MOTIVATION INDUCED LEARNING
- 2 HEALTHY LEARNING HABITS
- 3 LEARNING STYLES
- 4 PEER INFLUENCE
- 5 THE BENEFITS OF BOARDING SCHOOL
- 6 TEACHER-PARENT-STUDENT PARTNERSHIP



MOTIVATION INDUCED LEARNING



Encourage your teen to take control of their learning through frank discussion on what subjects they would like to take and what career they would be suited for. Teens should ideally choose subjects they love and they will thrive in. Although some subjects like Maths and English are not always favourite subjects, both are very important.

Remember, not everyone is destined to be a doctor so let your teen stay true to themselves when choosing their subjects and career options.

To encourage your teen with their studies:

- Set up a meeting with their careers advisor so they can flesh out some career options that might interest them. Have their careers advisor identify what subjects should be studied to achieve one or two chosen career pathways. Your teen is more likely to achieve good results from subjects that lead to their chosen career.
- Ask them if they are happy at their current school and if they like their current teachers – if not, maybe it's time to consider moving them to an environment they will enjoy being part of and thrive in.
- Encourage and assure them they have made a good choice with their career options. Reward them for effort and not for ability.

Students should set goals for each level of their NCEA study. Sit down with your teen to help them identify what goals are needed to fulfill their chosen career pathway. This will help them keep motivated and on track to achieving great NCEA results.

Here are some goal ideas to get you started:

- 1** Look up tertiary degrees to find out what credit requirements your teen needs to meet at each level of NCEA. Perhaps they need to get 60 'Merit' credits at Level 2? Make this a goal.
- 2** Does your teen's school have an academic rewards system like Scholastic Centurions (100% in a subject) or Scholars Ties (70% + GPA)? Have them choose an award to aim for.
- 3** If your teen is averaging Achieved grades on their report card get them to consider aiming for Merit grades instead. If they are averaging Merit grades get them to consider aiming for Excellence grades. They should always aim for their personal best.
- 4** Find a tertiary scholarship that they may be suited for and that will help them achieve their chosen career path. Find out the criteria for this scholarship. Have them aim to meet this criteria and apply for the scholarship as one of their goals.



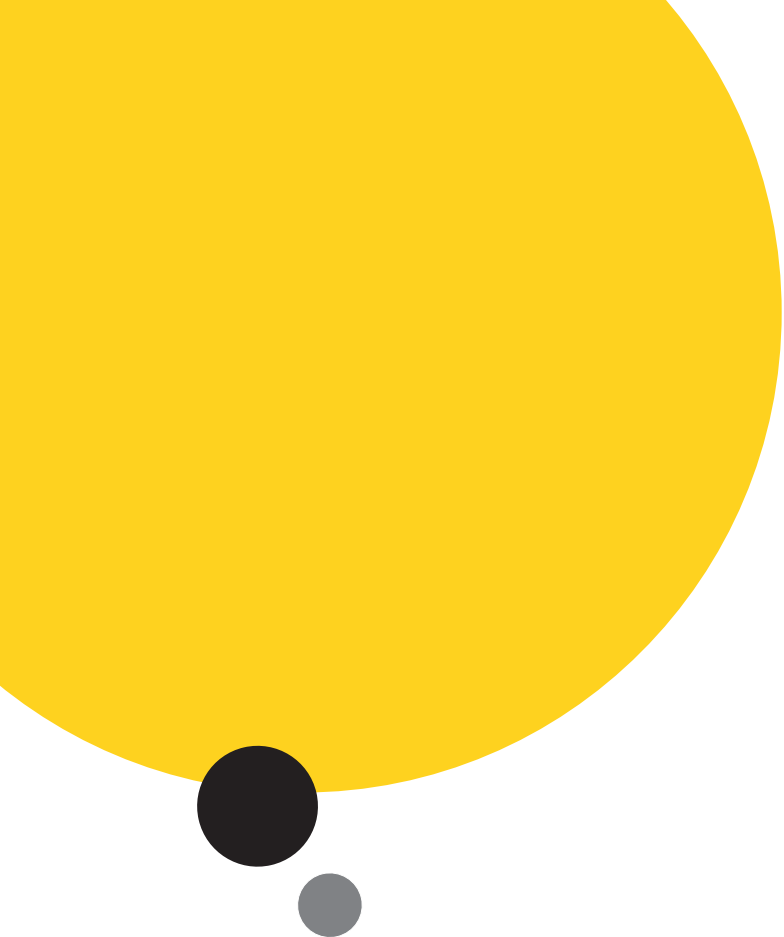


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The biggest reason for not achieving NCEA is student buy-in. Students need to be on-board and in-charge of their secondary education and their future.

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PETER HAMPTON
Head of Academics
St Paul's Collegiate School



HEALTHY LEARNING HABITS

STUDY ENVIRONMENT

Creating a healthy study environment at home will encourage your teen to get their work done, improve their productivity and remind family members (particularly siblings) that it's time to hush so your teen can concentrate.



To create the perfect study environment:

- 1** **Have a dedicated study space** where your teen can keep their books, pens and study items. This could be at the dining table or in a home office and not in their bedroom (bedrooms should be kept as a place of rest).
- 2** **Establish a routine.** Your teen should study for a set number of hours at the same time each day. Don't force them to study as soon as they get home from school, give them an hour to unwind before they get started.
- 3** **Remove all distractions** like the TV and their mobile phone. Phones can be stored on the kitchen bench charging during study.
- 4** **Encourage less lounging, more studying.** Lounging in front of the TV or on the floor with their laptop will only promote sleep. Encourage proper posture. Your teen should be sitting upright at a desk or table.
- 5** **Encourage regular breaks** so your teen can stretch their legs, have a drink of water and a snack. A five minute break should be taken every 30 minutes. This time should not be used to check social media.

STUDY HABITS

There are a number of study habits your teen should adopt early when striving to achieve the best NCEA results they can. This coupled with their hard work will ensure they reach their goals.



1 Avoid procrastination

The biggest issue with teen study is procrastination. To avoid this, students should have a set time each day for study and they should create a study plan for each study session. This should include a list of tasks they want to complete within that time.

2 Extra tuition

If your teen doesn't understand what was taught in the classroom they should seek extra tuition from their teachers before school, during lunchtime or after school. It's common for students to ask for extra help outside of school hours, that's what teachers are for.

3 Identify pressure times

There will be times throughout the year when your teen will need to submit a number of internal assessments or sit a number of external assessments. Sit down with them to identify when these pressure points are. Make sure their schedule is clear of social and extracurricular commitments during these times. Have them start on their internal assessment sooner than later to avoid last minute cramming.

4

Prevent burnout

Although study, study and more study is recommended for NCEA success, balance is also encouraged to avoid burnout. Taking part in extracurricular activities like sport or being part of the school production are all great options. A little rest and recovery is also recommended when needed.

5

Benchmark exams

Students are usually required to sit benchmark (practice) exams towards the end of Term 3. Some students don't bother studying for these exams because they believe they're not the 'real deal' but your teen should study just as hard for their benchmark exams as they will for their end-of-year exams. When a crisis occurs that prevents a student from completing their end-of-year exams their benchmark grades will be used as their final result. This happened with the 7.5 magnitude earthquake that prevented Canterbury and Wellington students from completing their exams in 2016.





REVISION, REVISION, REVISION

Each evening, your teen should read over their notes from class and identify areas they know and those areas they need to learn. The 'traffic light study strategy' is a great tool that helps students prioritise learning objectives. Students should use green, orange and red post-it notes to categorise objectives in order of understanding:

- Green - Knows the concept perfectly and can be tested on it.
- Orange - Has moderate knowledge of the objective and needs more revision.
- Red - Yet to be studied or indicative of difficulty.

Reds should be tackled first, then orange and then green. They should actively review content at least three times: the same day, the day after and one week later. This will help them better retain information.

Revision tools like mind maps, diagrams, flash cards or written notes help students recall what they studied. Old exams can be very beneficial too, they will familiarise your teen with question formats and time limits.

RECOMMENDED STUDY HOURS

6 WEEKS
BEFORE
EXAMS

Level 1
1-1.5 hrs

Level 2
1.5-2 hrs

Level 3
2.5+ hrs

ONLINE RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

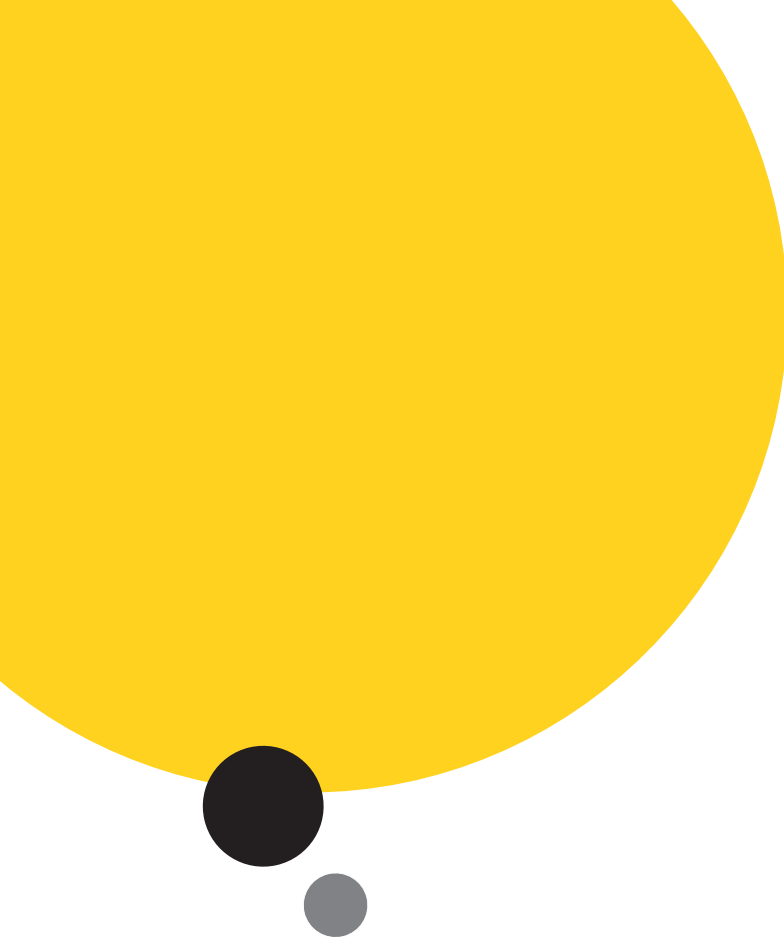
There are many free online resources currently available to students studying NCEA and other secondary school qualifications. As young adults of the digital age, online learning is a great way for students to study. Below are a number of study and organisational resources that your teen may find helpful.

- ncea.tki.org.nz
- studyit.org.nz
- my.livewirelearning.co.nz
- studystack.com
- schooltraq.com
- goconqr.com
- evernote.com
- marinaratimer.com
- quizlet.com
- studyblue.com



studystack.com
**is the ultimate
tool for online
flash cards!
Check it out.**

Use
marinaratimer.com
**to organise
study time!**



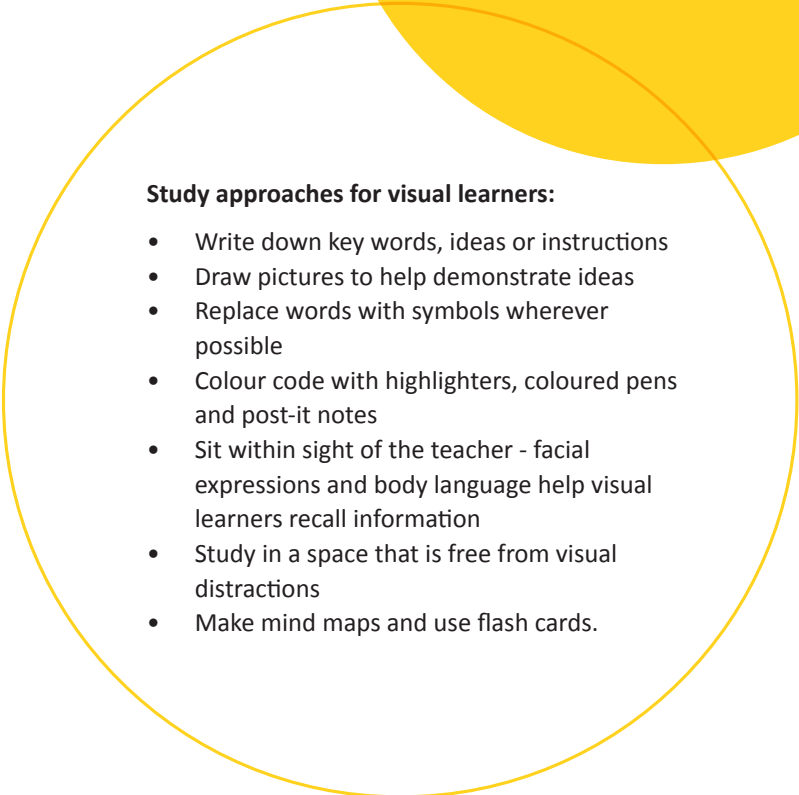
LEARNING STYLES

Students take in and process information in different ways – they will usually fall into one of three learning styles: visual, auditory and tactile. By identifying their learning style, will enable your teen to absorb and revise the content they learn in class rather than becoming bored and inattentive.



VISUAL

Visual learners learn best by reading or seeing pictures and diagrams. They understand and remember by sight. When they recall information, they usually see this as a picture. They will often close their eyes to visualise or remember things and can be easily distracted by sound. Visual learners learn best by *seeing*.



Study approaches for visual learners:

- Write down key words, ideas or instructions
- Draw pictures to help demonstrate ideas
- Replace words with symbols wherever possible
- Colour code with highlighters, coloured pens and post-it notes
- Sit within sight of the teacher - facial expressions and body language help visual learners recall information
- Study in a space that is free from visual distractions
- Make mind maps and use flash cards.



TACTILE

Tactile learners are very 'hands on.' They learn by touching and doing and by teaching others what they have learnt. They prefer to touch, move, build or draw what they learn. They need frequent breaks and will use their hands and gestures when speaking. They have trouble sitting still and find reasons to fidget when bored. Tactile learners learn best by *doing*.



Study approaches for tactile learners:

- Complete hands-on activities like art projects and building models
- Have a stress ball or another object that can be tinkered with while studying at a desk
- When using flashcards arrange them into groups to show relationships between ideas
- Take frequent (but not long) breaks during study periods
- Use a computer to reinforce learning through the sense of touch
- Teach friends or family members what they have learnt.




AUDITORY

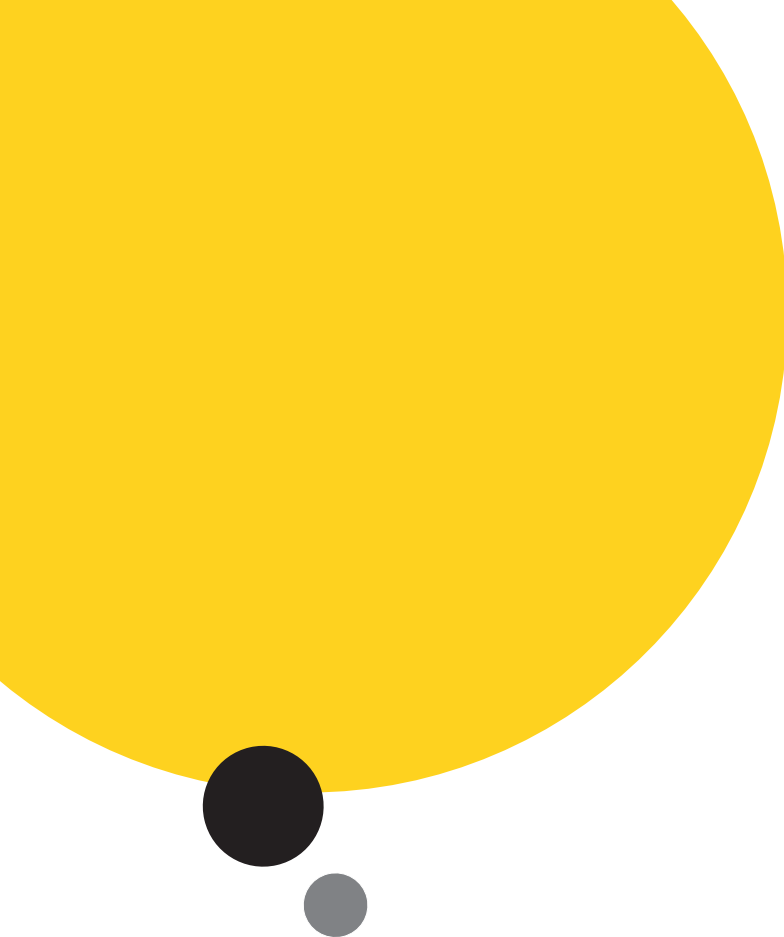
Auditory learners learn by hearing and listening. They understand and remember what they have heard and store information how it sounds. They prefer spoken instructions over written instructions. They often read out loud because they like the way it sounds. Auditory learners learn best by *hearing*.

Study approaches for auditory learners:

- Record lessons rather than take notes, listen to this during study times
- Study in groups and talk about ideas and concepts
- Listen to lesson recordings on an iPod while travelling to-and-from school
- Use flashcards but read the content out loud
- Read revision notes and new study material out loud
- Record ideas and sentence structures for assignments before putting pen to paper.

To help your teen discover their learning style, ask them to take this ***online quiz***.





PEER INFLUENCE



Being a parent of a teenager can be hard work, but try to remember your teenage years. They were pretty hard too, particularly when it came to peer pressure.

At this time in a teen's life, they're starting to pave the way for a career. They're making their own decisions (within reason), exerting their independence and expressing their opinion and individuality. So too are their mates. There's a lot going on, so it's no surprise your teen's peers can influence their NCEA results.

Here are some ways to encourage your child to seek out a motivated peer group:

Encourage new friendships

Encourage your teen to take part in extracurricular activities outside of school where they can meet new friends and find a different, more positive social circle.

Teach them about downtime

Teach your teen how to deal with boredom. Teenagers get into trouble when they don't have something to occupy them. It is ok to allow teens to have down time each day through activities they enjoy such as screen time or reading.

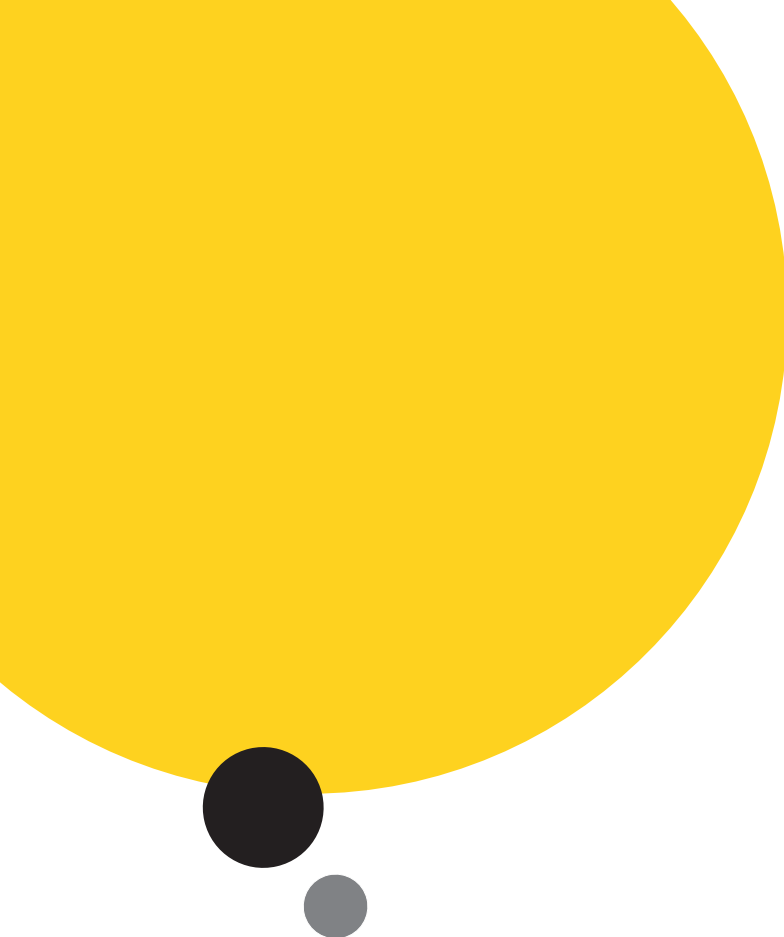
Open your home to their friends

Open your home to their friends and create a safe place for for your teen and their friends to hang out. Set up weekly 'gaming nights' or other activities they enjoy, invite them for dinner and slowly try to persuade them all to study together each week.

Set boundaries

Boundaries are important to set with teenagers and are often tested with the influence of peers. Your teenager may be tempted to cross these boundaries. Stay firm and don't be afraid to give consequences when boundaries are broken. Your teen will respect you more for this and be sure to reward them for good behaviour.





THE **BENEFITS** OF BOARDING



As a parent you may find it difficult to be assertive to your teenager when it comes to study time. You may also find it difficult to create the right environment at home. Perhaps you have a demanding job that doesn't allow you to be as present in your teen's school life as you would like to be. You are not alone – many parents struggle with the same issues.

Boarding school may be an option for your teenager. There are many benefits to boarding.

- It provides a structured, disciplined study regime
- Students have access to educators and resources outside of school hours which they would not have at home
- The responsibility of study is removed from parents and placed in the hands of the school
- Students study alongside their peers – this positively reinforces that their peers have to do homework too
- Study habits are developed early in the junior school with tightly disciplined sessions while in the senior years students study with less discipline and more independence which prepares them for university.

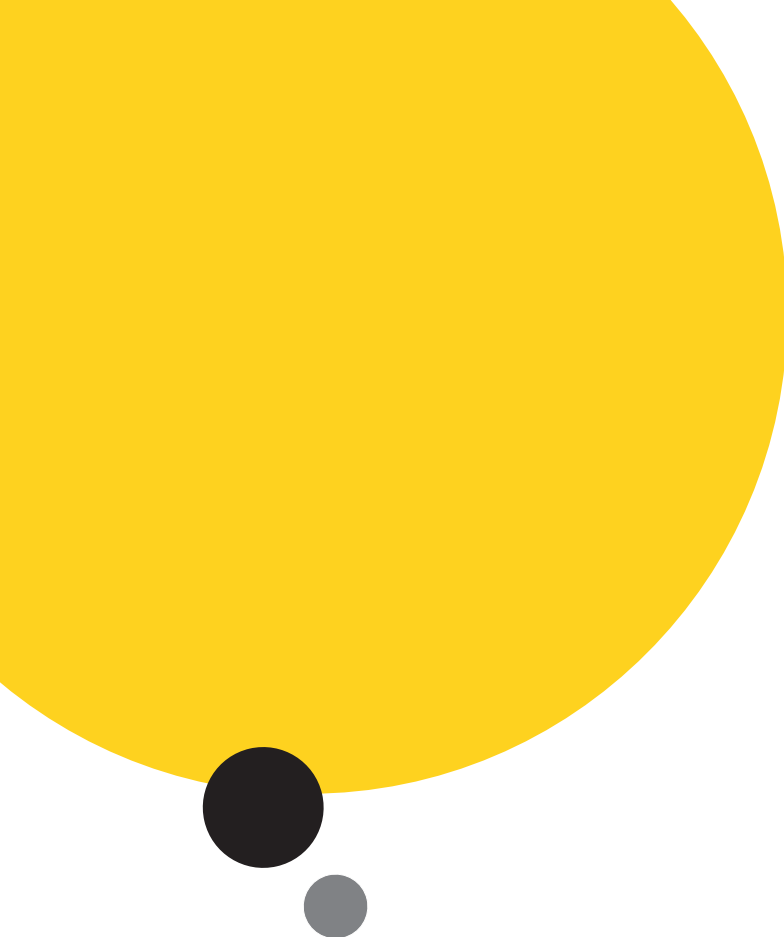
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Research has shown the controlled homework environment provided for boarding students results in higher academic achievement.

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PETER HAMPTON
Head of Academics
St Paul's Collegiate School





TEACHER-PARENT-STUDENT
PARTNERSHIP

6 ways you, as a parent, should be involved



To ensure your child has the greatest chance of NCEA success, it is important you, as the parent, work in partnership with your school and your child's teachers.

You can do this in a number of different ways:

1

Parent-teacher interviews - Meeting with their teachers in the first half of the year will help you to get an understanding of where your teen is at and what areas they need to improve. If your school doesn't offer a formal parent-teacher interview during this time then request one. Sitting down with each teacher, one-on-one, is the best way to find out how your teen is progressing in each subject.

2

Check their progress online - Most schools have an online portal for parents to check on the progress of their teen. Log into this regularly to see if they are meeting the requirements to pass NCEA. There can be a time lag of up to two months between the time a student sits an assessment and when the results are submitted to NZQA and becomes available on the portal or the NZQA website. This time allows schools to moderate student results before submitting to NZQA. This delay is another good reason why it is so important to attend parent teacher interviews in the first term.

3

Start asking questions - All schools have staff members who are responsible for the academic outcome of students. They are usually a dean or head of curriculum. You should be proactive about approaching staff members for more information about your teen's progress. If you have concerns throughout the year, send them an email. Learning is a partnership between the student, parent and school so get involved and start asking questions.

4

Understand the criteria and NCEA - The NCEA grading system is completely different to the old School Certificate system. Familiarise yourself with the NCEA system and the criteria needed to meet Level 1, Level 2, Level 3 and University Entrance. The better understanding you have the more helpful you can be to your teen.

5

Researching a career pathway - Choosing a career pathway can be a daunting decision for teens but as a parent, this is one area you may be able to provide support. After getting initial direction from the school's careers advisor, sit down with your teen and review the list of possible career choices. Identify colleagues, acquaintances or local business people who work in the sector of their interest, make contact with them to arrange a meeting and work-site visit. Making connections with prospective employers and understanding what education is required to fill roles in their organisation, provides an invaluable knowledge base for your teen.

6

Praise effort - Praise your teen for the effort they put into their school work and achieving their personal bests in the classroom. If Achieved grades are the norm and they start receiving Merit grades, celebrate their success. Their effort should be rewarded.





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To create strong academic outcomes for students there needs to be a strong relationship between the student, parents and the school. By working together, students are more likely to succeed.

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PETER HAMPTON
Head of Academics
St Paul's Collegiate School



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