



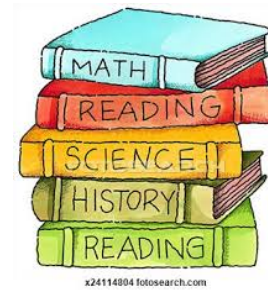
**Strathalbyn**  
CHRISTIAN COLLEGE  
*Learning God's Way*

**Starting Secondary  
at  
Strathalbyn Christian  
College**

[www.scc.wa.edu.au](http://www.scc.wa.edu.au)

## Things are a bit different in Secondary

This booklet will help you and your parents understand how things work and what to expect.



### How are things different?

- Students move from one classroom to another for various subjects rather than staying in one place.
- Students are likely to have more than one teacher and as many as 6 or 7 in a week because secondary teachers tend to specialise in a subject area.
- There is increasing choice of subjects.
- Different teachers have slightly different expectations and it takes a while for students to get used to this variation.
- Equipment for each class needs to be carried by a student since even though students have lockers to store materials, there is little or no storage in specific class rooms, and not every class for a particular subject may be in the same room. So organisation is vital!!



### What about homework?



- The amount of homework varies. Students might get a lot in a week or very little. This doesn't mean, however, that you have "no homework" because a good secondary student makes time for "study" or "independent learning" as well as homework. Again, planning and organisation is vital!
- **A minimum of 3-4 hours per week**, spread over most nights including some weekend time, is the expectation for Year 7 students.
- In secondary, few if any tasks have to be done "tomorrow". Usually there is a due date days or weeks ahead, so planning of time can take place. Our learning management system

(called Canvas) will enable students and parents to see what is due, and when, anywhere there is internet access.

- **It is important not to leave due tasks too late** (like the night before something is due!) as best results are not usually achieved that way.
- **It is best to set aside a regular amount of time each day** for homework and independent learning. If there is not enough set homework to fill the time, then use the rest of the time to
  - read over any notes from the day's lessons;
  - make some dot point notes in a separate book or file to help you remember important points;
  - read and make notes from the current chapters of your text book;
  - make a mind map to help you relate ideas;
  - do some extra questions on a topic from your text book or do some extra research on a part of the subject that you find interesting, or difficult to understand;
  - work through additional sections in your ebook;
  - watch an appropriate YouTube video about what you are currently studying;
  - you could also write out some questions to ask the teacher – perhaps next lesson, or in an email.



**THINK!**

*How much time did you spend on homework in primary school?  
Do you know what SCC's expectations are for secondary students? How will you find out?  
What do you think you will do for your homework time each night?  
How do you think you will fit in your schoolwork over the weekend?*

**Independent Learning:**

In secondary, teachers don't always talk about independent learning (some teachers will call it "study") – it is expected that you to do this! Students who do well have often worked this out themselves ... that the times you don't have much set work, you make up the rest of the time doing independent learning! So if you have 20 minutes of homework, you do 40 minutes of independent learning. If you have 60 minutes of homework, you don't do independent learning that day. This is one of the best habits you can develop to assist you in your secondary learning journey.

**Independent Learning** means **you** take responsibility for **your** studies, using your brain and asking yourself "what else could I do to help me understand this subject better?"

**Keep Going!** Try not to become complacent and think you don't need to do this. Evidence has shown, again and again, that students who do well at school keep doing this, though they may not tell everyone about it!

**Time!** Sometimes, students find when they start secondary they actually are doing more than an hour a night of schoolwork. This is ok in the first term as students are getting used to the expectations of secondary. However, if you find after that time that you are consistently doing many hours of schoolwork a night, you will need to talk to your parents and teachers about it. Planning is really important. We find that leaving things to the "last minute" is a recipe for stress.



**THINK!**

*See if you can come up with 10 examples of things that might be independent learning activities – ways to help you learn, remember and understand. You were given some examples earlier in this booklet. Can you add some more?*

**Manage your time well – Work Smart!**

**Work for your own success:**

- Don't pay any attention to what others may say about how much or how little they may or may not do;
- You are working to bring God glory, not to satisfy a friend or even your parents;
- Train yourself to do your hour or so of schoolwork each night and develop effective working habits that will build your academic skills in your subjects. You will then experience the joy and satisfaction of improving results through the year.

**Work Smart:**

- You may be thinking “how can I do all this and still have a life?” Well, this is secondary!
- You can expect your workload to increase for the next few years and you will need to be smart about how you manage your time.
  - Break homework time into blocks of half an hour with a short rest in between. Keep the breaks to about 5 minutes;
    - Blocks in the afternoon and in the morning before school works for some, if you are an early riser;
    - It is a good idea to remove all distractions such as TV and internet, during these blocks. Put your mobile phone away. Use your device strictly for homework or independent learning;
  - Research shows that a quiet location promotes better learning, so turn off the music!
  - Later years in secondary will require more time each day, so work out this year what works best for you and keep doing it!
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**THINK!**

*How well have you managed your work for school in the past?  
Do you work in distinct blocks of time and keep schoolwork and personal time separate?  
What works best for you?  
How well do you manage your distractions at home?*



**Timetable:** If you have lots of out-of-school activities, it is a good idea to make up a weekly timetable for yourself. Fill in all of your activities for the week, including your family meals and help times, then shade in when you will fit in your schoolwork hours. Deciding this in advance makes it much easier, as you know when the times are that you have allocated to schoolwork.

**Activities:** If you can't fit enough hours for schoolwork into your busy week, you may need to choose between your activities and just keep the ones you are most passionate about. Usually in secondary you cannot do as many outside activities as you did in primary school. Or you may need to give up some TV or computer time. It might mean getting up half an hour early to do work before school. Talk with your parents about the best way to make it all work.



**Family:** Sometimes unplanned things happen in families. That is why it is important to think ahead and work towards a goal of completing tasks ahead of time.

**That part time job:** Many secondary students have part time jobs. This adds another level of complexity to life. The same advice given for activities applies to part time jobs. Consider what you do and how you do it and count the consequences of what you do.

	<p><b>THINK!</b>  <i>What outside activities do you do?          Have you tried making a timetable before?          How would you spread out the work for school over the week?</i></p>
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### Being Organised Makes Life Easier

Here are some top ideas to think about for being organised.

#### Your Locker:

- Buy some dividers or magazine holders so you can stack things in the locker neatly. Remove rubbish or loose papers each day so they don't get out of control.

#### Your computer:

- Set up a folder on your device where you can store all of your documents for school, then within this folder create another folder for each subject (e.g. Maths, Science, etc.);
- It is important to regularly back up your computer/device. Work out how often you will do a back-up and schedule this in your timetable or calendar. You might need to obtain an external hard disk to keep your backups on or backup to "the Cloud".



#### Your desk:

- It's a good idea to have a space at home dedicated to schoolwork, if possible;
- Good lighting is important;
- Have spare stationery; pens, pencils, printer cartridges etc.;
- Try to clear your desk space each day. That might be something you do during your break time, but it shouldn't be part of your independent learning time;
- Have some in-trays where you can file papers you are working on;



- Have a noticeboard with a term planner or calendar that shows all the due dates for tests and assignments. This helps to keep you on track;
- In secondary keep everything for a year, don't throw things away. So set up a folder, file or magazine holder for each subject where you can file away past tests, study notes and sheets you are finished with. In some secondary years there are exams that cover the whole year's work, so keeping past work is vital for learning purposes.



**THINK!**

*What could you do to improve the way your room is set up? Talk with your parents about this.*

*Do you have a noticeboard and planners?*

*Do you have folders or an alternative for filing?*



**Your timetable:**

- Make a few copies of your timetable. Colour-code it – for example all Science lessons coloured in green and so on;
- Keep a copy in your locker, on your noticeboard at home and in your diary or schoolbag;
- Some students like to put the matching colour on the books and textbooks associated with that subject.

**Your Bag:**

- Never run around packing your bag in the morning. That is a sure way to forget things. Instead, pack your bag each night before you go to bed, checking your diary and your timetable. This way you do not forget important items and things like PE uniform;
- If there are things you have to pack in the morning, then put a post-it note on your bag to remind yourself;
- Don't expect your parents to do it for you!



**THINK!**

*What is your morning and evening routine like?*

*What could you do to set up more organised routines?*

*Do you forget things? How can you make sure that doesn't happen again?*



**Ask for Help Often and Early**

- **We all need help:** Nobody expects you to know everything or to do everything on your own. One of the most important contributors to being successful academically is to ask for help often and early;
- **Ask in class:** This means when you don't understand something, put up your hand in class and ask. Other people in the class will probably be grateful to you, as they may have had the same question;
- **Never give up.** Remember that teachers are people too. Don't feel discouraged if your teacher doesn't respond the way you are used to. Keep asking questions and **always** be polite;
- **See teachers when needed:** If you still don't understand, go to your teacher at the end of class and ask if you could see them at lunch or after school for some extra help. Teachers would much rather fix up problems early than have you come up to them 3 weeks later and say 'I don't understand any of this';
- **Lots of people can help:** If you find your teacher's explanations hard to understand, you have people in your life who, even if they can't help you, can point you in the right direction;
- **Extra opportunities:** Some teachers offer extra help sessions, for example, Maths after school. Check with your teacher and see what is available. Perhaps, if you have more serious problems, a tutor may be worth considering;
- **Resources:** If you find a subject difficult, it is worth borrowing or buying an extra study guide or textbook on that topic. It will give you another source to refer to and more questions to use as practice. You may also be able to find some good assistance online.



**THINK!**

*Are you comfortable asking for help in class?*

*Who else do you have in your life you can ask for help?*

*What sorts of things are important for asking for help in the RIGHT way?*

**Develop the Skills You Need for Success**

**Learning to learn:**

- The first years of secondary are where you will learn many things about 'how to learn'. Develop these skills and talk to older students or siblings, ask teachers or parents for guidance.

**Extra skills:** Some of the skills you may need to work on improving are:

- Research skills
- Assignment skills
- Presentation skills
- Writing skills
- As well as particular skills in your subjects.

**Don't get "side tracked":** Students often think that just sitting at their desk is studying, but really they are wasting time doing something that has no bearing on their learning. Success comes to those who minimise distractions.

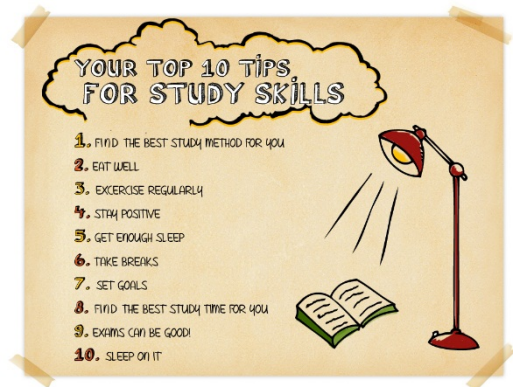
- Turn your phone or device off!
- Turn the TV and music off!
- Keep focussed on what you need to do and don't let family members distract you;
- If noise in the house is a problem talk to your parents about the need for a "quiet place".

**Studying for tests:** Make sure you know how to study properly for a test.

- Don't wait for someone to show you; be proactive and learn the skills as you need them;
- Remember, study is not just looking through your book the night before a test.

**There are 3 main things to remember about studying for a test:**

- Realise that you will be tested in most areas in secondary so prepare early;
- Make study notes, or summaries first (make mind maps or write down in point form what you need to learn);
- Learn these notes not just by reading but by testing yourself on them. Ask someone to help you learn the material;
- Do as many different questions as you can as practice, particularly in maths. The more you do the better you get at answering all the likely types of questions.



	<p><b>THINK!</b>  <i>What areas do you think you may need to develop your skills in?          Do you think you could learn more about how to study effectively?</i></p>
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### Look After Yourself, Your Mind, Your Body and Your Spirit

Finally, it is hard to be a super student unless you are doing these essentials:

- Getting enough sleep (most students need around 8 hours sleep a night, so work out what time you need to be in bed to keep the right sleep patterns);
- Eating healthily;
- Drinking lots of water;
- Exercising regularly;
- Taking time out to relax, recharge, spend time with family and friends and do things you love;
- Not spending too much time looking at a screen!
- Spending time reading the bible and praying.







**THINK!**

*How healthy are you in each of these lifestyle areas?  
What could you do to improve in these areas?*

Senior Secondary students on excursion



## Notes and Ideas