ST PIUS X COLLEGE, MAGHERAFELT

Retrieval Practice
A Parent Guide

Simple, effective revision strategies for any subject

ST. PIUS X COLLEGE MAGHERAFELT

Retrieve it
Bring learning to mind from memory.

Check it
Look back at notes and fill gaps.

Use it again
Practise in a different way to make it stick.

1 What is retrieval practice?

Retrieval practice means recalling information from memory without looking at notes first. It strengthens learning and helps childrers remember more over time.

- **Strengthens memory**
- **Shows what your child really knows**
- **Builds confidence**

2 Why it works

- Improves recall of key knowledge and vocabulary.
- Builds confidence for homework, tests and classwork.
- Helps children connect ideas.
- Makes revision more active than re-reading.
- Supports long-term learning.

3 What can children retrieve?

- **Key words** — important vocabulary and meanings
- **Facts** — dates, events, names, quotations
- **Steps** — methods, routines, instructions
- **Concepts** — big ideas and explanations
- **Processes** — how something works or happens
- **Examples** — worked examples or model answers
- **Diagrams** — labels, parts and visual memory
- **Definitions** — clear meanings in their own words

4 Easy retrieval activities at home

Simple ideas. Real progress.

- **Quick quiz** — Ask short questions from memory.
- **Flashcards** — Questions on one side, answers on the other.
- **Blurting** — Write everything remembered, then check gaps.
- **Cover and recall** — Read, cover, then say or write what was remembered.
- **Plan from memory** — Plan a short answer without notes, then improve it.
- **Mark and improve** — Check an answer and add missing detail.

5 A simple 20-minute revision routine

A little time each day makes a big difference.

5 mins: quiz from memory → **5 mins:** check notes and correct gaps → **5 mins:** practise one short question or task → **5 mins:** reflect on what needs more work next time

6 Questions parents can ask

- What can you remember without looking?
- Can you explain it in your own words?
- Which facts, words or steps prove that?
- What do you need to revisit tomorrow?
- What was difficult today?
- What strategy helped most?

7 Helpful reminders

Do:
- ✓ Keep sessions short and regular.
- ✓ Praise effort and improvement.
- ✓ Encourage explanation, not copying.
- ✓ Mix learning and practice.

Avoid:
- ✗ Only re-reading notes.
- ✗ Leaving revision until the last minute.
- ✗ Focusing only on easy topics.
- ✗ Doing long, tiring revision sessions.

Small steps, repeated often, lead to lasting learning.