

# Home Learning Advice for Parents and Carers



Your child's school will communicate with you and provide learning activities for your child to do at home, using their normal communication methods such as the school website, newsletters, parent mails and other online tools. This is a document offering advice and guidance to support you to support your child's home learning.

## Key Considerations

### Parent responsibilities during remote learning

Provide support for your children by:

- establishing routines and expectations
- defining a space for your child to work in
- monitoring communications from teachers
- beginning and ending each day with a check-in
- taking an active role in helping your children process their learning
- encouraging physical activity and/or exercise
- checking in with your child regularly to help them manage stress
- monitoring how much time your child is spending online
- keeping your children social, but set rules around their social media interactions

### Student responsibilities during remote learning

These responsibilities should be adjusted according to the age of your child:

- establishing and/or following a daily routine for learning
- identifying a safe, comfortable, quiet space in their home where they can work effectively and successfully
- regularly monitoring digital platforms and communication to check for announcements and feedback from teachers
- completing tasks with integrity and academic honesty, doing their best work
- doing their best to meet timelines, commitments, and due dates
- communicating proactively with their teachers if they cannot meet deadlines or require additional support
- collaborating and supporting their classmates in their learning
- seeking out and communicating with school staff as different needs arise

## **Establishing routines and expectations**

From the first day, you will need to establish routines and expectations. Where possible use the timetable or schedule provided by your school to set regular hours for school work.

Keep normal bedtime routines for younger children and expect the same from your older children too.

It is important that you set these expectations as soon as distance learning is implemented, not several days later after it becomes apparent a child is struggling with the absence of routine.

If home learning is too stressful, take a break and don't be too hard on yourself or your children. This is an unusual situation with heightened levels of worry and anxiety. Instead, you could try a fun activity, a quick burst of exercise or a mindfulness activity.

## **Setting up a learning environment**

Try to create a quiet and comfortable learning space. Your child may have a regular place for doing homework under normal circumstances, but this space may not be suitable for working in for an extended period of time.

A space/location for extended learning should be a public/family space, not in a bedroom. It should be a place that can be quiet at times and have a strong wireless internet signal, if possible. Above all, it should be a space where you or another adult is present and monitoring your children's learning.

## **Wellbeing**

Being confined to home for an extended period of time can cause stress and conflict. Tips for looking after your children during isolation include:

- Talking to your whole family about what is happening. Understanding the situation will reduce their anxiety.
- Help your children to think about how they have coped with difficult situations in the past and reassure them that they will cope with this situation too. Remind them that the isolation won't last for long.
- Exercise regularly. Options could include exercise DVDs, dancing, floor exercises, yoga, walking around the backyard or using home exercise equipment, such as a stationary bicycle, if you have it. Exercise is a proven treatment for stress and depression.
- Encourage your children to keep in touch with family members and friends via telephone, email or social media (where appropriate).
- The child health team has some great ideas for activities to do at home. We will be sending these out to you via your child's school.

# Communication

## Communicating with your child

We encourage you to start and finish each day with a simple check-in. These check-ins need to be a regular part of each day and start straight away. Not all students thrive in a remote learning environment; some struggle with too much independence or lack of structure and the check-ins help keep them on track.

### In the morning, ask:

- what are you learning today?
- what are your learning targets or goals?
- how will you be spending your time?
- what resources do you require?
- what support do you need?

### In the afternoon ask:

- what did you learn today?
- acknowledge one thing that was difficult. Either let it go or come up with a strategy to deal with the same problem if it comes up again
- consider three things that went well today. Why were they good?
- are you ok? Do you need to ask your teacher for something? Do you need help with something to make tomorrow more successful?

These specific questions matter because they allow your child to process the instructions they have received from their teachers and help them organise themselves and set priorities. Older children may not want to have these check-ins with parents (this is normal!), but they should anyway.

## Communicating with the school

Make sure that you know how the school and your child's teachers will be communicating with you and check that channel regularly.

Make sure you know how to contact teachers for learning support and who to contact for technical support if your school chooses to use digital devices as part of their remote learning plan.

This situation will be new for most schools and families. Schools will be trying to engage in a cycle of continuous improvement and refinement based on feedback so they may ask you and your child for your thoughts on how the system is working.

Most schools already use some kind of platform to communicate with parents and students. These existing platforms should continue to be used whenever possible.

## Communicating with teachers

Teachers may be communicating with your child during this period using video chat applications such as MS Teams, Adobe Connect, Skype or Zoom. They may also be emailing or communicating within a learning management system such as Microsoft Teams or Google Classroom.

Teachers may have set times where students can chat with them online and they can deliver video lessons. When digital options are not possible they may have set times for calling your child on the telephone.

It is important for you and your child to remember that teachers will be communicating with dozens to more than 100 other families and that your communications should be meaningful and short. You may also need to remind your child to be patient when waiting for support or feedback.

## Managing screen time

Screen time refers to the amount of time a user spends on a device to access on-screen activities.

There are limits as to the amount of time everyone should spend online, but the amounts and the rules for screen time vary by age. Video conferencing and social interactions using video do not count towards screen time.

The following recommended screen times (excluding video conferencing) are based on the recommendations from the American Academy of Paediatrics’:

**Ages 2 to 5:** 1 hour, broken into sessions of a maximum of 30 minutes.

**Age 6 and above:** no specific screen time limits, but screen time should not affect physical activity and face-to-face interactions at home and school. Consistent limits on screen time are also very important.

Some screen time activities such as online socialising and gaming can be very immersive. Make sure that non-school activities are limited in length.

**Lastly, remember that it's ok if things don't always go to plan. You are doing you best and you should be proud of yourself for trying!**

(Some content adapted from NSW Government)