

# Home Learning: Supporting Wellbeing

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## Helping you and your child through home learning

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COVID has necessitated a level of social adaptation from everyone not seen in decades. Among these has been the need for many homes to become virtual online classrooms for their children's schools. Although this shift presents itself with many opportunities, it can also be a source of difficulty and frustration not only for the schools but also the young people and their carers. Teachers, parents, and young people must now navigate a form of schooling which, until COVID, was a part of a futuristic world. In this fact sheet we present some information which we hope can assist parents, carers, and their children make home schooling as hassle free as possible.

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## What are some strategies I can try?

### Talking helps:

- Each week have a chat about what your children's week will look like; considering what the school has asked them to do. Perhaps even write this up into a schedule that can be displayed somewhere (on the fridge). With the young - and young at heart, you could even 'Play' school, by having a timetable and roles for family members such as Principal and extra students by using toys.
- Talk with your children about what they have to do – sometimes what might appear to be a lack of engagement of their learning could be the outcome of a lot of things. For example, sometimes children might be bored with the work they have been given. This might mean you have to contact the school and ask for some work that will extend them. Sometimes children may not know how to tackle the work they have been given. Again, this might need some additional resources from the school. Sometimes children are lonely and missing their friends and this is impacting on how they feel about their schoolwork. There could be a lot of things bringing about what you see..... talking is often the best way to find out!

### Provide 'mini-breaks':

- Make sure that the 'chunks' of time spent on schoolwork are realistic – being in a room on your own studying is not like school; more 'mini breaks' might be a better way to manage the work. Remember that in a classroom, there is some natural down time. For example, as students walk in/out of class, and get ready to start/leave the class or laugh at a classmate's joke. So do not despair if they are not 100% on-task 100% of the time.

### Schools are social places:

- We often forget that schools are social places for our children too. If there is flexibility in what the school has asked/sent home for your children to complete, think about how you can schedule in opportunities to engage them in activities that they would also do at school aside from learning:
  - Connecting with friends
  - Spending time just hanging about during breaks to recharge batteries
  - Doing some physical activities

- Ensure that these activities are built into the week and that you encourage these to be taken up – as well as schoolwork. This can also create opportunities for yourself and other members of the family who might be at home to do some activities together – going for a walk; playing football at the local park (whatever is allowed under the public health orders). It may help you with managing your working from home if your all have a 'recess' or 'lunch' together. Make this a work and school free' time – step outside and have a chat about everything else.

### Privacy and space:

- It's also important to respect the privacy and space that going to school creates for your children. This is challenging to respect, particularly when there is a lot of anxiety and chatter around about the impact of COVID on students' progress. It's about finding a balance between being supportive and ensure that some learning is done and allowing your children to experience some of the autonomy they have when they are at school.
- Be aware of how you talk with your children about school; if the talk is concentrated only around doing/achievement this may act as a demotivator. School is much more to young people – it is a place where they engage with their friends, they can try things away from their families etc.
- Listen and check in. These are unusual times for your children as well as you. They may be missing the interaction with their friends or the hands-on aspects of their favourite class. This may be an opportunity for you and them. For example, you can do some Kitchen Science (search YouTube for Kitchen Science) or other activities that can be done at home.

### It's not all bad:

- Finally, as carers of children, we may worry even when things are going well. Remember that some of our digitally comfortable children are in their element and may be doing their work rather quickly and finishing up before some of their peers. Prior to assuming that this is a challenge, discuss this with your children's teachers. If all is well, let them enjoy their new-found advantage by giving them a choice of what to do their extra time. Be flexible and perhaps think 'outside the box'... this might not be extra work.