



Staying well and learning at home: A guide for families

17rd April 2020

Dear Families,

The staff at Darra State School are sharing information in regard to the continuation of student learning whilst at home. There are three goals that we wish to keep in mind during this uncertain and evolving situation. We want to help our school community to remain **calm**, we want to ensure **clear communication** and we want to show **compassion**.

We have around 140 families that attend Darra State School and we have approximately 15 staff members that have their own families. That is why we want people to know that what we expect with home learning needs to be flexible and agile. We will need to work together to adjust and respond and we cannot expect a one size fits all will result in the same outcomes for all our families. That is to say that we will have families with parents needing to attend to a large portion of their day attending to their own work demands, we will have families dealing with multiple children at home working on different schedules depending on their age and stage of schooling, families supporting elderly relatives and families with a range of access to devices and the internet. These and other situations will not only play a role in the families of students that attend Darra SS, but also the staff of DSS and that is why we need to show **compassion** to all members of our community.

Please see below, five recommended practices that are intended to support you and your family during this period of remote learning. If you have any questions, concerns or would like to discuss anything further, please don't hesitate to contact the school via 37166444 or admin@darrass.eq.edu.au

1. Continue to promote and prompt regular hygiene practices

To stop the spread of illness, your family should continue to:

- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water, or disinfectant hand rub
- Cough and sneeze into a flexed elbow or tissue
- Dispose of tissues immediately after use
- Minimise direct contact with others

Building a strong immune system is your best defence against illness. Supporting all members of your family to consume a balanced diet, get enough sleep, reduce stress and exercise regularly can help to boost everyone's immunity.

2. Open the lines of communication

Establish the practice of open and regular family communication. This will promote connectedness and will help your child feel more emotionally and physically safe during this uncertain time. Stay on top of factual information and make sure that you what you are sharing with your child is age appropriate. It is important that your child is empowered with relevant information and that they are not following or spreading misinformation or rumoured news.

To **prepare** for the period of remote learning, you could discuss the following as a family:

- What does wellbeing and learning at home look like, feel like and sound like during this period?



- What challenges may present and how can we support each other to manage these?
- How can we respect each other’s boundaries and create personal space and time for each other?
- What strengths can we lean on to support us during this period? (e.g. respect, safety, resilience, curiosity to learn, kindness)
- What opportunities does this period of remote learning provide us as a family? (e.g. increased family time, a time to slow down)

If we implement remote learning, **during** this time you could schedule a daily family check-in and discuss:

- What went well today?
- What challenged us today? What might we do differently tomorrow?
- What progress did we make?
- What are we grateful for?
- How did we look after our well-being today? (e.g. We made time to exercise, took regular breaks, connected with friends, practiced mindfulness, kept a routine, etc.)

It is important that you continue to model the behaviour and attitudes you want to see in your child, which includes remaining calm and positive, even though this may be a hard at times. If you notice your child is displaying signs of distress or upset, talk with them about what they are feeling and why. Don’t hesitate to contact the school, or reach out to other support providers. (e.g. [Headspace](#))

3. **Create a learning space for your child/ren that promotes and protects good health and wellbeing**

Consider how you can support your child to set up the right environment for learning. You might think about:

- The type of chair and table your child has access to which can support their back and posture
- The temperature, natural light and airflow of the learning space
- Distractions that might impact learning (e.g. TV, gaming console, social media, etc.) and how to monitor usage

Where possible, your child’s learning space should be separate from their bedroom or other personal learning space. It is important your child does not work on their bed or on the couch in front of the TV.

4. **Create a routine that works for you and your family**

Creating and maintaining a schedule at home is important to help your child balance their school and personal time. It is important to work together to develop a schedule that enables children to prioritise both school work and personal time.

You may consider the following essential activities and tips when developing a remote learning routine:

Essential Activity	Helpful Tips
A set morning routine	Maintaining a regular morning routine will keep your child’s body clock in check. It is important that your child maintains a regular wake up time, showering and dressing routine to help them get into the right mindset for learning.
Daily movement	<i>Physical activity is critical to maintain not only your child’s physical fitness but also their mental clarity and focus. The Australian Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines suggest children and young people need approximately 60 minutes a day of moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity.</i>



Consumption of regular, nutritious meals and snacks	If possible , children should have access to nutritious meals and snacks to help fuel their brain and improve their concentration and energy levels.
Goal setting	<i>Setting goals can support your child to develop and maintain a sense of purpose and direction while learning remotely. You should encourage and support your child to set both a learning and wellbeing goal to promote balance.</i>
Learning	It may be useful to schedule learning ‘blocks’ throughout the day. Learning can be chunked into 20 minute to 1 hour learning blocks (depending on the age of your child), with regular breaks scheduled in between. Personal devices and other distractions should be removed or set aside during dedicated learning hours. It may also be useful to set a timer during these learning blocks to help maintain focus.
Take a brain break	<i>Wellbeing is improved when your child can spend time focusing their attention and awareness. They may like to complete some mindfulness activities through “Smiling Mind”, or other mindfulness apps. It is also important to get up and move during brain breaks, so encourage your child to regularly stretch, walk around and get some fresh air and sunlight.</i>
Device free time	It is important to include some screen free learning and personal time each day when learning remotely. Your child might use this time to read or get creative through other activities such as cooking, drawing, or writing a letter to a friend or relative.
Daily reflection	<i>Your child should take time to reflect on their day and consider what worked well, what goals they achieved, what they are grateful for and what they should focus on tomorrow. This reflection can be shared during a family daily check in.</i>
Connecting with friends	Keeping connected with friends is critical to ensure your child doesn’t feel isolated or lonely. Maintaining positive relationships will support wellbeing. You should support your child to make the effort to connect and check in with their peers online or via a phone call.
Relaxation and play	<i>Planning for relaxation and play is just as critical as planning for learning. We encourage a mix between individual activities and family activities.</i>
Family time	Spending quality time as a family ensures you maintain connection and provides an opportunity for sharing, discussion and reflection each day. It also provides a time to just enjoy each other’s company and have fun.
A set night routine	<i>A sleep routine is just as important as a morning routine. Your child should be encouraged to maintain good sleep routine, including getting at least 8 – 10 hours of quality sleep each night, and at least 1 hour of screen free time before bed.</i>

5. Be flexible and empathetic

This period of remote learning is new for all members of our learning community and it might take some time to get things right. Please continue to practice and model empathy for everyone involved in this transition. Everyone is doing the best they can and it is important to continue to practice kindness, understanding and patience with one another.



Attendance at school (via online learning) will be monitored and rolls will be marked daily. It is important that you note and follow the following information:

- Students are required to let their teacher know they are learning at home each day by 11am. This will be able to be done through the Ed Studio blog or by emailing the class teacher (students in the middle and upper school can use their school email to let their teacher know).
- Students whose families have informed me their child/ren will be learning at school will have the roll marked in the usual way, so if your child is sick you need to notify the school office.
- Students who are not accounted for by either methods, the parents will receive an SMS notifying of the child's absence from school as is our usual process.

If you have any concerns about your child's learning at home, please contact us via the admin email address above or your child's teacher's email:

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Kind regards,

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