



The following information update is provided to parents/carers from the College regarding COVID-19.

This information was last updated and is current as at **Thursday 26 March. Additional updates will be provided as required and when information changes.**

Dear parents/Carers

Today the Premier announced whilst all public schools will remain open until the end of term, families are strongly encouraged to keep their children at home if they have the capacity to do so.

I would like to share with you what this will mean for our College community:

Monday 30 March to Friday 3 April

- If your child/children have to attend the College, students will continue to be taught; however this may be through modified classes.

Final week of Term – Monday 6 April to Thursday 9 April

- Students who attend will be supervised, but not taught normal lessons.
- Teachers and education assistants will prepare teaching programs for Term 2.

Term 2 – commencing Tuesday 28 April

- At this stage arrangements for Term 2 have not been finalised. The State Government is working on developing a longer term education model for Term 2 and beyond in response to COVID-19.

Please be assured that when I receive further information I will provide details to you as soon as I can.

Once again I would like to thank you for your support and cooperation during this unprecedented situation.

Please remember, that if if urgent mental health advice and support is required for yourself or your children, there is a 24 hour crisis support line 1800 048 636.

Please refer to the information below which may be helpful.

Regards
Leigh Cottrill
Principal

TOP PARENTING TIPS FOR PARENTS AND CARERS IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

1

Reassure your children that your family is your top priority.

Say something like "I'm your parent, it's my job to keep you safe and we are doing everything we can."

2

Maintain everyday family routines.

Keep to usual rising times, mealtimes, and bedtimes. Every family is different. Involve children in working out any new routine (e.g., have a daily plan of activities for school-aged children who are at home).

3

Have plenty of interesting things to do at home.

Busy children are less likely to be bored and misbehave. With your child, help create a list of 20 activities that will keep them busy (not just screen time).

4

Take notice of behaviour you like.

Think about the values, skills and behaviours you wish to encourage in your children at this very difficult time. There are many opportunities to teach your children important life skills (e.g., being caring, helpful, cooperative, getting on well with siblings, taking turns). Use plenty of praise and positive attention to encourage behaviour you like. Give them positive attention letting them know you are pleased by telling them what they have just done ("That's a lovely card you have written to your grandmother. That's so kind. She will really appreciate that.")

5

Make sure your child knows you are ready to talk.

Children need to be able to talk to parents about their concerns and have their questions answered. When a child wants to talk about their feelings, stop what you are doing and listen carefully. Avoid telling your child how they should feel ("That's silly. You shouldn't be scared about that.") Let children know it is OK to be worried. Talking or drawing can help children get in touch with their feelings and figure out what they are anxious about.

TOP PARENTING TIPS FOR PARENTS AND CARERS IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

6

Be truthful in answering children's questions.

Find out what they know about the issue before answering. Keep answers simple. Get information from trusted sources (e.g., official government websites) rather than social media.

7

Have a family plan of action.

Involve children in preparing the plan. As situations can change quickly (e.g., new travel restrictions, school closures), update the plan as needed.

8

Help children learn to tolerate more uncertainty.

The COVID-19 crisis creates uncertainty for everyone. Parents need to find a way to accept uncertainty and, through your actions and words show this acceptance to your children. It's OK to say, "I don't know; let's find out what we can." Big changes to children's lives can be hard and are often scary. They can also create opportunities for learning new skills.

9

Take care of yourself the best you can.

Deal with your own distress by taking actions that give you a better sense of personal control. Stress management skills such as mindfulness and/or deep breathing can help reduce stress. Keep healthy and safe (good personal hygiene, exercise daily, eat well, get enough sleep, avoid using alcohol or drugs to lessen stress). Avoid behaviour that might increase your stress. For example, while it is helpful to keep informed about COVID-19, constant checking on your screens can increase stress.

10

Reach out and connect with loved ones.

Make greater use of phones, online communication tools (video conferencing) and social media to keep in touch with family, friends, and neighbours. Help others in need who are going through a tough time and are more vulnerable (e.g., parents/caregivers with disabilities, older people).

Written by Matthew R Sanders and Vanessa E Cobham
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