

Advice for Parents for Continuity of Learning from Home: TISKL

Establish routines and expectations

As a parent, one of the most supportive things you can do for your child as part of the CLH (Continuity of Learning from Home) measures is to set up some clear routines and expectations. Don't wait until you can see that your child is getting into difficulties - put a clear routine in place at home now.

TISKL would suggest that you:

- Set a fixed time each day for your child's school work. This will not necessarily need to be of the same duration as a regular school day. Students can expect to receive assigned work (or be invited to a live video conference) between normal school hours (8am-3.30pm), but the school recognises that the actual 'home learning time' you set will need to be governed by other factors, such as when your child has access to a device to go online.
- Stick to the usual meal times and bedtimes.
- Ensure your child takes regular breaks in order to move physically and to switch their focus (known as a 'brain break').

Define the physical space for your child's learning

The learning environment plays an important role in how well your child is able to learn. Even though your child may have a regular space they use for doing homework, this may not necessarily be appropriate for an *extended period* of learning. We encourage you to identify a space/location where your child will be learning most of the time that:

- Is not their bedroom (turning the bedroom into a workspace could end up having negative effects on their ability to get quality sleep in there)
- Has a strong and stable internet connection if possible
- Has quality lighting - daylight is best
- Can be kept quiet and free from distractions, eg. the sound/sight of the TV, when necessary
- Enables you as parents/caregivers to monitor their activity

Monitor communications from the school and from the teachers

Teachers and the school management will be communicating with parents via email, when and as necessary. Parents are encouraged to use school email for any queries they themselves have, but to be mindful that individual teachers are now responding to a far larger number of these sorts of communications than usual. Therefore, we ask for your patience and understanding if a reply is not immediately forthcoming.

If you have a question about the functionality of any of the technology we are using for learning, such as Google Classroom, Google Drive or Google Hangouts, please start by asking your children to explain and show you how they work.

Begin and end each day with a check-in

Starting and ending each day with a simple conversation about your child's learning can have a huge positive impact. Ask them:

- "What are your learning goals or targets for today?"
- "How are you going to organise and spend your time today?"
- "What resources do you need?"
- "What support do you need?"

These brief 'grounding' conversations matter. They encourage students to properly process the instructions they receive from their teachers, and to organise themselves and identify their priorities. Older students may not want to have these sorts of conversations daily, but parents should persevere. Not all students thrive in a home-learning environment; some struggle with too much independence and the lack of structure. Therefore, check-in routines need to commence early on, before students start to fall behind.

Establish times for quiet and reflection

This is inevitably a greater challenge for families with multiple children, especially where each child has different needs. There may be times when siblings need to work in different rooms from one another. Parents might also need to consider some noise-cancelling headphones to block out distractions.

Try to take an active role in enabling your child to process and 'own' their learning

Under normal circumstances within TISKL, your child would interact with their peers and teachers perhaps hundreds of times a day in connection with their learning - answering or asking a question in class, talking about and discussing homework or a project with their friends, helping another student to understand something, debating different ideas or theories with their classmates, etc. While some of these sorts of social interactions that support learning will still happen in our new 'virtual school' environment, others will not. Human beings learn best when they have opportunities to process their learning

with others. So, as well as the daily check-in, parents should look for opportunities to talk with their child(ren) about what they're learning. Parents should also encourage their children to conduct learning conversations with their classmates via video chat platforms and phone calls.

However, it is important that your child takes responsibility for their learning - this means it doesn't really help if you do it for them, even if they are struggling. Instead, talk the struggle through with them; help them to identify for themselves what steps they might be able to take to get 'un-stuck'.

Encourage physical activity and/or exercise

This is vitally important, not only to a child's mental and physical wellbeing and health, but also to their learning. Ample research supports the idea that physical activity boosts brain power and cognitive abilities.

If going out to exercise is not possible, perhaps encourage the children to help out with household chores as a part of their physical regime.

Remain mindful of your child's stress or worries

Our CLH measures are implemented in response to the current serious situation. This might be triggering a range of emotions, fears, worries and anxieties in students. As a parent, you will inevitably have your own concerns of a similar nature, but do your best to avoid transferring your own stress to your children. Whether they admit to it or not, your children will be feeling on edge, and the stability and normality you can provide now will be highly valuable.

Keep your children social, but set boundaries around their social media interactions

Although there may initially be some excitement on the part of your children that school has closed, this will soon fade as they begin to miss their friends and their teachers. Help your children to maintain contact with the members of their school community by encouraging them to join in with the online discussions and virtual lessons.

Please be mindful of your child's social media use, though. Older students tend to rely more than younger ones on social media (such as SnapChat, Facebook, Instagram and

Whatsapp) for staying in touch with friends; but an increased amount of time on social media brings increased capacity for online bullying.

If they receive any messages they are uncomfortable with, please encourage them to discuss this with you or to get in touch with their Year Co-Ordinator or one of our school counsellors. Remind your children of the importance of always speaking with good purpose - in 'virtual' conversations just as much as in face to face ones. They should be polite, respectful and kind in all of their interactions, and remember that they are publicly representing your family's values with everything that they post and write.

Monitor how much time your child is spending online

TISKL does not want its students staring at computer or phone screens for 7-8 hours a day. We ask that parents remember that most teachers are currently not experts in 'virtual'/distance learning, and that it will take some trial-and-error for us to find the right balance between online and offline learning activities to set your children. Furthermore, we are all having to learn very fast about things like Google Hangouts for whole-class live online lessons; teething troubles are inevitable to begin with.

Senior staff are interested to hear what you're noticing at home, so that we as a school can explore how to make any necessary adjustments. We thank you in advance for your patience and your partnership!