



ST JOSEPH'S COLLEGE GEELONG

Learning At Home - Advice for Parents & Carers



COMPASSION INNOVATION INTEGRITY



Introduction

As this way of teaching and learning is new for us all, we know we will continue to improve and learn together. Please remember if our school is not running in the usual way, it does not mean our school is closed. Learning will continue. It will take some time to adjust to new ways of delivery and support but we will continue to adapt and develop our learning program to best support the students of St Joseph's College.

The following information includes advice, tips and resources to help parents and carers support their child's continuity of learning from home. It is derived from the latest information provided by the Department of Education and Catholic Education Melbourne.

About Learning from Home

To provide learning continuity for your son, it is important they have as much routine and certainty as possible. To support learning at home, you are not required to be a subject matter expert or educator. Your role is to partner with your son and St Joseph's to support his home learning. We are aware of some difficulties with internet access.

Families are to consider ways they can access material if there are problems. Normal ICT support is available by contacting the College ICT Help Desk at helpdesk@sjc.vic.edu.au or phone 52268174. Parents/Carers should use normal communication tools such as the school website, emails and other online tools to access up to date information and for general queries.

St Joseph's will communicate with your son via SIMON on Daily Messages, Class Notices and via email. All students and parents will have been emailed a student reference guide which can also be accessed via SIMON. Additional information is provided through the Remote Learning Links including planning each day, staying safe on line and handy hints.

How to support your son

You can provide support for your son by:

- providing a space for him to work in
- establishing routines and expectations
- providing a level of supervision appropriate to his stage of development
- monitoring communications
- checking in with your son often to help them manage and pace their work
- monitoring how much time your son is spending online.



Setting up a learning environment

We recognise that every home is different. Where possible, it's important to provide 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 an extended period of time. For some families, having all children around one table may work best.

Where possible, extended learning should take place in a space your family shares. For example, a lounge room or dining room. These spaces are preferable over a bedroom, where:

- it can be isolating for your child
- supervision can be more challenging.

It should be a place:

- that can be quiet at times
- that has a strong internet signal, if possible
- supervision is possible (as needed)

Establishing routines and expectations

- Start and end each day with a check-in.
- Encourage regular exercise breaks. Options could include exercises, yoga, walking around the garden or using home exercise equipment.
- Encourage healthy eating habits and drinking enough water.
- Keep normal bedtime routines.

It's important that you set these kinds of expectations as soon as learning from home begins, rather than several days later if you notice a child is struggling without a routine.



Communicating with your child

We encourage you to start and finish each day with a simple check-in. These check-ins can be a regular part of each day.

In the morning, ask:

- What are you learning today?
- What are your learning goals?
- How will you be spending your time?
- What resources do you need? What support do you need?

In the afternoon, ask:

- What was your favourite learning activity today?
- Tell me one thing that was difficult today. Have you discussed this difficulty with your teacher? Who could help you with this besides the teacher?
- Tell me one success you had today – what was good about it?
- Have you made a list of what is due this week or the tasks you need to complete?

Regular check-ins throughout the day may also be appropriate. This depends on your son's needs.

These questions allow your son to:

- process the instructions they get from their teachers
- help them organise themselves and set priorities.

Advice for parents of children with additional needs

- [How you can support your child with additional needs at home](#) – this resource helps parents support their child's learning at home.
- [Understanding learning difficulties for parents: a practical guide](#) – this guide provides parents with practical advice about learning difficulties. This includes the evidence base supporting particular intervention programs and a [recommended apps](#) list for students with learning difficulties.
- For additional information and support please contact Mark Turner, Educational Support Coordinator on mark.turner@sjc.vic.edu.au



Our Wellbeing

Schools are not exempt from the challenges that come with the COVID-19 outbreak, and a major change will be the way our students engage with their learning. Change, particularly when it is the result of an unprecedented event, can result in people experiencing a range of emotions and can trigger behaviours that may not have been witnessed on such a large scale before. Now more than ever, there is a need for parents and carers to call upon the social and emotional skills that ensure you look after your own wellbeing and also do everything you can to protect the wellbeing of your sons in our SJC community.

To support parents and carers we have compiled information and resources that can be accessed on the SJC school website under 'Our Wellbeing'.

<https://www.sjc.vic.edu.au/new/student-wellbeing/covid-19-resources>. Online tools and resources can be helpful during this time and we will endeavour to regularly update these resources for you.

- It is important to email your son's Homeroom Teacher if your son is unwell or you have any concerns and positive news as well.
- The Year Level/House Coordinators remain committed to checking in with students in their House or Year Level as are the Heads of School and we encourage families to make contact with them when in need of support with wellbeing and behavioural issues.
- If your child is supported by Educational Support, an Educational Support Officer (LSO) or Mr Turner will be in direct email contact to help with best learning outcomes.

Managing Screen Time and Online Safety

St Joseph's is committed to creating and maintaining a child safe environment. Remote learning may increase the amount of time that students spend online and increase the potential for online safety incidents to occur. We will ensure child safety by following our child safe policies including:

- Ensuring that lessons and assistance to students will be only be provided using school approved and monitored software.
- Avoiding one on one contact online between staff and individual students and the event that this is unavoidable, logging each contact.

We would also appreciate your assistance in helping us keep students safe online. Parents and Carers are encouraged to be familiar with the tips and resources about how to keep your children safe online via the following link <https://www.esafety.gov.au/parents>.

The guide covers some of the key online safety issues for young people and includes a range of practical tips and advice on what to do if things go wrong. You can also find a list of important services that can offer extra support. <https://www.esafety.gov.au/parents/online-safety-guide>.



Responding to Child Safety Incidents

Please alert us immediately if there are any concerns or red flags that you notice. This may be individuals on school platforms that you and your children do not know, inappropriate messages or any signs that the platforms may have been compromised. Contact emails for relevant H/R teachers or Year/House coordinator or Head of School are available through PAM or the Student Remote Learning Links on SIMON.

The school's existing child safety structures will also remain in place, including our Child Safety Policy and Child Safe Codes of Conduct. Our staff members are aware that they must continue to comply with their child safety reporting requirements, and we ask that you alert a staff member immediately if you have any concerns about your child or any other student at the school. We also encourage students and families to report any cyber-bullying or image based abuse to the e-Safety commissioner through this link <https://www.esafety.gov.au/report>.

If your concerns relate to a member of staff you are encouraged to please contact the Principal or Deputy Principal. Our Child Safety Officers are also available to provide advice as is the EREA Regional Director via the EREA National Office at (03) 9426 3200. If a child is in immediate danger please call 000 for assistance.

From the SJC Wellness Team

To support your child's mental health through the current self-isolation measures, apply routines and structures around the use of devices, bed times, getting up and dressed (out of pyjamas), showering and eating. Having some predictability around these areas provides reassurance to your young person during this time of uncertainty.

It is important parents continue to monitor their young people. Pay attention to any changes in their behaviour, which might seem disproportionate to current circumstances. These could include changes in the way they communicate, changes in their sleeping patterns or personalities, for example if they are becoming more withdrawn, irritable or arguing more.

You may like to discuss any concerns you have about your young person with one of the College Clinicians during usual school hours. Be aware also, that many psychologists and organisations are offering telehealth counselling services which you can access via your GP.

Our College Clinicians will continue to provide support to students as required during this period of college alternative education provision with some differences. As face-to-face services are no longer available, telehealth sessions will be offered.

Before a service is offered, College Clinicians will discuss with students and/or parents aspects such as the following:

- If the environment is appropriate for telehealth services
- If the presenting issue is appropriate to be managed remotely.
- If the presenting issue needs face-to-face management, a referral to an external provider will be suggested.



Further information about consent for telehealth services, privacy, confidentiality and safety will be provided.

The College Clinicians can be contacted on collegeclinicians@sjc.vic.edu.au during school hours.

If you require crisis support, or need to speak with someone immediately, please contact one of the following, or contact your local GP.

- Kids Help Line - Phone: 1800 55 1800 (open - 24hrs) Access web counselling and email counselling via this link <http://www.kidshelpline.com.au/teens/>
- EHeadspace - Phone: 1800 650 890 (open 9am – 1am). Access counselling chat service or email counselling via this link <https://www.eheadspace.org.au/>
- Lifeline. Phone: 13 11 14 (open – 24hrs). Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service Triage. Phone: 4215 8600 (Mon – Fri 9am – 5pm)
Further wellbeing resources include
- <https://headspace.org.au/young-people/how-to-cope-with-stress-related-to-covid-19/>
- Australian Psychological Society (APS) = https://www.psychology.org.au/getmedia/5a4f6500-b5af-44829157-5392265d53ce/20APS-IS-COVID-19-Public-P2_I.pdf
- Australian Government Department of Health - <https://www.health.gov.au/>

Adapted from <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/learning/Pages/home-learning.aspx#link38>

