



Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Never in a million years, as they say, did I ever think that I would be writing a newsletter article about how to manage stress and anxiety with children due to a Pandemic. I can't even imagine what our little ones are thinking and imagining at this time, as it is hard for us - as adults - to keep up with the level of information that is being delivered through the media and relevant authorities. Not only are we having to manage the information but the implications of this information impact so many aspects of our lives. I am sure, that like staff, you are trying to cope with the rapid rate of change at the moment and the stress and anxiety that come with the 'unknown'. Very difficult indeed!

By way of trying to support parents and caregivers in how to speak to your children about what is going on I would like to share with you a very good presentation entitled COVID 19 A Guide for Parents. It is presented by Dr Michael Carr-Gregg who, "is one of Australia's highest profile psychologists, author of 14 books, broadcaster and a specialist in corporate mental health, families, parenting, children, adolescents and the use of technology for mental health." ([schooltv website](#))

In this [Parental Guide](#) Dr Carr-Gregg recommends 10 suggestions:

1. Keep information simple and factual
2. Reassure your child
3. Explain what is being done
4. Embrace the opportunity to discuss how we learn new things together
5. Encourage self efficacy - what we can all do to make a difference
6. Stick to routines
7. Give them a frame of reference that they can understand.
8. Explain that this virus does not discriminate
9. Know the signs of anxiety
10. Address the issue of panic buying.

This presentation is very accessible and I highly recommend it. Worthy of special notice is what Dr Carr-Gregg says about knowing the signs of anxiety. Some of these include and increase in the following behaviours:

- Irritability
- Temper tantrums
- Being overly clingy
- Changes in eating and sleeping
- Difficulty concentrating
- Forgetfulness completing tasks

If any parent requires any assistance in supporting children with managing at the moment, please do not hesitate to speak to your child's class teacher or myself, who will organise a referral to Mrs Trudy Ricketts (school counsellor). You may find some other ideas on the below website.

Let us pray the words of Pope Francis in his prayer to St Joseph, as referred to in last week's [Catholic Outlook](#).

God bless you and your families

[Mental Health and Wellbeing for Parents](#)

Bernadette Fabri
Principal

PRAYER TO ST JOSEPH

Protect, O Holy Guardian, this our nation.

Enlighten those responsible for the common good, so that they might know — like you do — how to care for those entrusted to their responsibility.

Grant intelligence of knowledge to those seeking adequate means for the health and physical well-being of their brothers and sisters.

Sustain those who are spending themselves for those in need, even at the cost of their own safety: volunteers, nurses, doctors who are on the front lines in curing the sick.

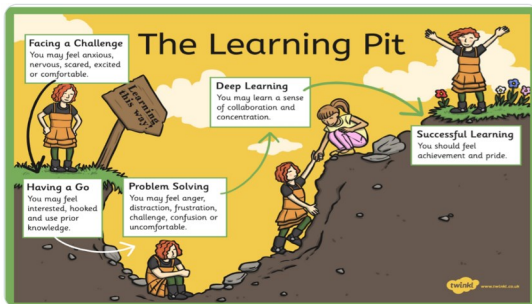
Bless, O St Joseph, the Church: beginning with her ministers, make her the sign and instrument of your light and your goodness.

Accompany, O St Joseph, our families: with your prayerful silence, create harmony between parents and their children, in a special way with the youngest.

Preserve the elderly from loneliness: grant that no one might be left in desperation from abandonment and discouragement.

Comfort those who are the most frail, encourage those who falter, intercede for the poor. With the Virgin Mother, beg the Lord to liberate the world from every form of pandemic.

Amen.



From the Learning Pit..

As we move into 'Learning From Home' I thought it may be worth sharing again some video tutorials showing how to log on to Google classroom via computer or an ipad.

[St Patrick's Google classroom Tutorial](#)

[St Patrick's Google Classroom App Tutorial](#)

COVID -19

Please find a link to Frequently Asked Questions regarding the COVID - 19 virus from NSW Health that may answer some of your questions. The school is guided by the best advice from NSW Health with regard to all procedures to minimize risk of possible contamination.

<https://preview.nsw.gov.au/covid-19>

SCHOOL WELL-BEING COUNSELLING SERVICE

The wellbeing of children and young people in Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta schools is of paramount importance. A sense of well-being and connectedness in schools promotes optimal development of the person and contributes to academic success.

Access to counselling services can be made by contacting your child's classroom teacher or Ms Fabri, who will then put forward a referral. Mrs Ricketts will then contact you for further information.

LEARNING FROM HOME

This is a new section of the newsletter which will address some aspects of 'Learning from Home'. It will also contain some resources, ideas and suggestions.

ST PATRICK'S PARRAMATTA RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES AND PROTOCOLS PARENTS AND STUDENTS 'LEARNING FROM HOME'

St Patrick's Parramatta continues to deliver quality learning experiences to our students during these ever changing times. As always the safety and wellbeing of our community members is our key priority as we move into 'Learning at Home' and online learning.

For many parents and caregivers, supporting your child to learn at home for extended periods of time will be a new experience. We have included some guidelines or protocols to help support you as you facilitate and monitor your child's learning throughout the day, whilst trying to maintain a regular home routine. To assist with this process please find some Frequently Asked Questions that may be helpful.

What will the school provide?

The school will provide learning sequences, online or as a hard copy, for students to complete throughout the day. At this stage these will be one week packages at a time. Online will be available through Google Classroom and hard copy will be available only for families that do not have access to the internet, at this stage. These can be collected from the school office. Please ring before coming to the school for pick up so they will be ready for you with minimal delay.

How can I communicate with staff? (At this stage staff are still teaching in their classrooms so communication will be as usual. When the numbers of children at school decrease, staff will be communicating using a 'learning from home' model: Please see below)

- Staff will be available Monday - Friday, between school hours 8:30am - 3:00pm.
- Email the school: stpatricksparra@parra.catholic.edu.au.
- Students can ask questions via Google classroom if they need assistance throughout the day.
- You may also wish to book a phone conversation with a teacher.

Where will children record their learning responses?

- In Google Classroom
- Using the exercise book brought home from school. (If your child is away from school and has not brought it home you may come and pick it up or use a dedicated exercise book from home, which will hold all the learning during this time.)
- Learning sequence booklet provided by the school for children who do not have access to the internet.

How should I structure the Learning Day for my child(ren)?

Although we understand it may be difficult to follow a strict schedule or timetable it is important to set up a **familiar learning routine** so your child understands it is not holiday time. This needs to suit your home context with consideration to the availability of space(s) to work and the number of devices available if going digital, for example. Every household is different and what may work for some may not work for others.

It is also recommended that families keep the normal morning and bedtime routines as this will help your child adjust to the new learning experience. This may resemble the following:

- wake up and have breakfast. (modified getting ready for school routine)
- dress for school (for younger students it may be beneficial to dress them in their uniform/ or 'learning' clothes, to help them see it is school time)
- move to the specific learning space in the home or set it up with the child(ren) if it is a multi purpose section of your home such as the dining room table. It is important to set the expectations on day one as it will help your child adjust and maintain their learning. This ["Setting Up the Learning Environment Checklist"](#) from NSW Department of Education may assist.
- Say a prayer together. (Prayers are said every day at school to begin the learning day. The children are used to this)
- Children commence the learning.
- Breaks from learning
- Complete the learning for the day - conclude with an 'End of Day Prayer' such as, **Dear God, thank you for today; for my work and my play. Thank you for my family, my classmates and my teachers. I look forward to more learning tomorrow. Amen**
- NSW Department of Education resource, ["Remote Learning Guidelines for Students and Parents"](#)

How do I start?

Spend some time on the first day discussing with your child the routines. This is not a time for negotiating timeframes with your child but rather informing them of the routines and expectations. It is important to set regular hours for school work. Some aspects you may wish to discuss with your child include:

- Establishing and/or following a daily routine for learning.
- Identifying and organising a safe, comfortable, quiet space in their home where they can focus effectively and successfully (not their bedroom)
- Importance of regularly monitoring Google Classroom to check for updates, announcements or feedback from teachers.
- Completing tasks with integrity and academic honesty, doing their best work
- Doing their best to meet timelines, commitments and due dates
- Communicating proactively with their teachers if they cannot meet deadlines or require additional support
- Collaborating or supporting their classmate in their learning
- Seeking out and communicating with school staff as different needs arise.

Should I give my child(ren) breaks from their learning?

Yes These should include regular breaks for activities, eating and drinking. During activity breaks it is important that students get up and move away from the computer screen or booklet and move around. These times are often referred to as **'brain breaks'** and allow the brain to make connections in the learning.

During a regular school day your child has two half hour breaks, where they are encouraged to participate in physical activity. This should be encouraged to continue so your child can re-energize their body. This may include; playing with their siblings, dancing to their favourite song, star jumps or simply walking around the house.

What if my child(ren) needs assistance with their learning or if I have a question?

Remember you are not alone - the staff will be available to assist and answer your child's questions within a reasonable period of time and this is how: **(Please be mindful that at this stage teachers are fully engaged in teaching classes so the response will be as soon as practicable)**

- Email the Class Teacher using Skoolbag
- Contact the teacher using Google Classroom
- Email the Class teacher using the school email: stpatricksparra@parra.catholic.edu.au.
- Phone the school to book in a phone meeting if necessary.
- Phone the school to leave a message for the class teacher to contact you.

School phone number is 8832 4600.

To assist the Catholic Education Department of Parramatta has provided the following advice to help you communicate with your child about their learning:

We encourage you to start and finish each day with a simple check-in. These check-ins need to be a regular part of each day and start straight away. Not all students thrive in a home learning environment; some struggle with too much independence or lack of structure and the check-ins help keep them on track.

In the morning, ask:

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

In the afternoon, ask:

- *What did you learn today?*
- *Acknowledge one thing that was difficult or they would like to work on. (A wish...)*
- *Consider two things that went well today. Why were they good? (2 stars ...)*
- *Are you ok? Do you need to ask your teacher for something? Do you need help with something to make tomorrow more successful?*

How do I ensure Cyber Safety when my child(ren) is working on devices?

All teachers have discussed with their class, safe and appropriate use of information and communications technologies when they are using devices at school.

It is important that during this period of home learning that we maintain safe and responsible use of technology therefore normal school protocols and privacy information must be observed when students are communicating with peers and teachers. This includes using Google Classroom to ask questions to the teacher or peers about the learning task.

Please reinforce with your child(ren) that **it is not a social networking tool. All correspondence through Google Classroom must be related to learning.** If it is used inappropriately the teachers have an option of muting individual children until they demonstrate that they understand and adhere to the protocols.

Please follow the links for more information around how to ensure your child is cyber safe.

Raising Children.net.au

[Australian Government; eSafety Commissioner](#)

[Responsible Use of ICT and Social Media for Students](#)

How do I speak to my children about COVID 19?

A very good resource has been prepared by Michael Carr Gregg on [COVID 10 - A Guide for Parents](#). Definitely worth a viewing.

We understand that these questions and answers may not cover all the individual situations families may find themselves in. Please be reassured that as more questions arise, the school will keep in communication with families; to guide or support you. These are indeed anxious and changing times for families who are being bombarded with multiple sources of information about a variety of areas.

The school fully understands that every family situation is different and will manage learning at home in their own way. These are guidelines only.

The staff at St Patrick's Parramatta are committed to supporting our students and families during this time.

Thanking you for your continued support

Ms Fabri, Mrs Standing and Staff at St Patrick's Parramatta

STAFF DEVELOPMENT DAY DATES

Every year the school is required to hold 6 Staff Development Days (SDD) when students will not be in attendance. These days may be set aside for the spiritual and/or professional development of staff. To assist parents and caregivers to keep track of these days please find the following information:

1. 30/01/2020 Staff preparation and gathering of Maths data on individual children.
2. 31/01/2020 Gathering of Maths data on individual children.
3. 21/02/2020 Building Sustainable Practices (Dr Michael Mc Dowell)
4. 4/05/2020 Religious Education Curriculum (Anthony Maher) To Be Confirmed.
5. 17/12/2020 Gazetted SDD for all schools in CEDP
6. 18/12/2020 Gazetted SDD for all schools in CEDP

2020 School Terms

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|---------------|--|
| Term 1 | Concludes on Thursday 9th April |
| Term 2 | Monday 27th April to Friday 3rd July |
| Term 3 | Monday 20th July to Friday 25th September |
| Term 4 | Monday 12th October to Wednesday 16th December |

19 Positive Suggestions for Christians during the Covid-19 Pandemic

At all times and in all places, Christians are people of hope, living our lives in the light of the Risen Lord. How might this translate into our day to day approaches during the time of the Coronavirus pandemic?

1. *Cooperate with health authorities*

Ensure our messaging and behaviour is in line with the latest advice from our health authorities. As Christians, we recognise we have a higher authority in Jesus Christ, and yet we are the Church in the world, and thank God for the gift of intellect, expertise and care offered by health professionals.

2. *Be supportive of leadership*

Our leaders: political, religious and community-based, are developing approaches in line with evolving advice from health authorities. How can we practice patience and show support to our leaders during this challenging period?

3. *Fast from despair and selfishness*

As Christians, Jesus calls us to love our own self, and to trust in the God who loves us beyond measure. How do we show self-love and care? Be kind to our self, treat our self to a chocolate or good book or movie. Be the good news of the Gospel and seek out good news stories and share them. We are called to love one another. Offer acts of kindness, either through letting someone into a traffic queue, to taking a roll of toilet paper out of our trolley and offering it to our neighbour. Surprise people with our generosity.

4. *Fast from judgement*

There are stories emerging of those who are buying extra items from shopping centres, not to hoard, but to share with neighbours who have self-isolated or otherwise unable to travel to shops. As Christians, we are called not to judge, and certainly not to socially exclude people from different cultures based on groundless fears of their association with the virus.

5. *Cultivate our prayer life*

Bring our worries, doubts, joys and sorrows to Jesus Christ. He seeks to listen to us and to help bear our burdens. To contemplate the face of Christ, practice Christian meditation and other forms of spiritual discipline help us build up our relationship with our loving God.

6. *Seek to understand and help explain changes to religious practices*

There are good health reasons for all the changes to our religious practices, and it helps if we do not simply change our behaviour but understand the rationale. Also, who may need extra help understanding these changes in our own social networks? It may be particularly confusing for those for whom English is a second language.

7. *Offer spiritual comfort to those who are spiritually challenged*

For those who are particularly wedded to a particular religious practice, seek out spiritual comfort from our leadership so that they do not cultivate false ideas that they are doing the wrong thing by God or their faith. For instance, for those who receive communion on the tongue, there is a wonderful explanation of the dignity of receiving communion on the hands by the fourth century saint, Cyril.

8. *Challenge religious superstition and encourage devotion*

Be prepared to counter false teachings in a charitable way. Christians are not exempt from coronavirus if we pray in a certain way, touch certain objects, or practice a particular devotion. However, devotions, when they cultivate our love for God and strengthen our faith, are wonderful practices.

9. *Cultivate the wisdom of elders and those who have experienced hardship*

We respect the dignity of all, yet this is not only in our care for one another. We also call upon the giftedness of elders and those who have been through hardship. There is a powerful witness in the story-telling – particularly for our young people – of those who have survived war, famine, illness, abuse and persecution.

10. *Social distancing does not mean social isolation*

How do we ensure that we continue to connect with our neighbour? While we seek to preserve physical health through distance, our emotional, psychological and spiritual health requires ongoing social interactions.

11. *Be creative – if stopping one thing start three more – postpone, rather than cancel, and turn challenge into opportunity (crisis)*

If your group or event can no longer happen, use the word “postpone” rather than “cancel” and brainstorm at least three creative ways to replace what you are missing. Catch up via phone, mail a gift, or break into smaller sub-groups for shorter well-spaced gathering.

12. *Develop your spiritual language around suffering so as to be able to converse with people who may have questions and doubts at this time*

As a Christian, people may ask for your interpretation of events or simply be looking for answers in a space and time of vulnerability and fear. How might we deepen our response to speak of a compassionate, loving God who suffers with us, and longs for us to live life to the full?

13. *Practice the art of accompaniment – recognising that many people have pains and sorrows beyond the pandemic*

Pope Francis encourages us to become skilled in the art of accompaniment, of walking alongside our neighbour, listening and encountering them in their joys and struggles. How might we deepen our listening during this time, being sensitive to people’s pains and sorrows.

14. *Develop positive, intentional and prayerful virtual community support*

Plan now with others how to connect via social media platforms or even a teleconference, to regular, prayerful fellowship in the absence of physical meetings.

15. *Create a watch list of people who are self-isolated – develop care packages*

Be alert to those who are needing to self-isolate and find ways to develop care packages to help them through this time.

16. *Assist those who are isolated and non-tech savvy*

Be aware of those in your neighbourhood who may be isolated. Do they require support? Do they need help setting up ways to remain informed and communicate with others with the aid of technology?

17. *Cultivate a neighbourhood spirit whereby we offer to do shopping for others – maybe a street newsletter – share possessions, watch out for those in need*

This is a time for the spirit and strength of neighbourhoods to shine.

18. *Show particular concern for those in hospitals, prisons, detention centres, aged care facilities*

Consider Jesus’ call to go to the margins, to the ones sometimes forgotten by our society.

19. *Cultivate our joy*

We recognise as Christians that there is a faith, hope and love that is beyond this present life. The quiet joy and confidence we exhibit through this time will be a sign of hope and witness to our belief that this current crisis is not the end of the story. Indeed, we are invited into God’s story of love for each of us.

<https://www.numeracyathome.com/>

The following is taken from guidelines published by the NSW government:

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/>

Length and area

Learning how to measure can be great fun for young kids when it's combined with rolling playdough or wrapping presents.

At a glance

- Kids learn about length and area through trial and error playing with things such as blocks.
- Kids need to be encouraged to explore and manipulate objects and talk about the things they are discovering.
- Kids initially develop an understanding of measurement through comparing objects.
- Before using a ruler, kids can learn to measure the length of a table (for example) using pegs, spoons, books or hand spans.

Children learn when they play. They can learn about length and area through trial and error playing with things such as blocks, ribbon, modelling clay and toys.

As they play, children begin to take notice of the size and shape of objects; how things fit together, how they can be stacked, and the length and width of objects. Kids need to be encouraged to explore and manipulate objects and talk about the things they are discovering.

What you can do to help your child learn to measure

- Use modelling dough to roll out two 'snakes' of different lengths. Talk about one snake being 'shorter' and the other 'longer'.
- Roll two snakes that are the same length from modelling dough. Turn one into a zigzag or curved snake. Ask your child, 'Which snake is longer?'
- Trace around your child's hand or foot onto a piece of card and cut it out. Use this to measure the length of things such as a table or their bed. Before you measure, encourage your child to guess how many 'hands' long the bed is.
- Roll a toy car down a ramp and measure how many car lengths it travelled.
- Walk around objects and talk about how many steps it takes.

TUESDAY SPARTANS CANCELLED FOR THE REMAINDER OF TERM

Due to the current public health warnings and the ever changing situation around COVID-19, our Tuesday afternoon Spartans sessions will no longer continue for the remainder of this term.



**ENROLMENTS FOR
2021
KINDERGARTEN
ARE NOW OPEN**

Enrolment packs for Kindergarten 2021 are available from the school between the hours of 9am -3pm Monday to Friday.

The completed Enrolment Application, together with originals of all requested supporting documentation, must be submitted, in person, to our school office. You will need to bring copies and originals of your child's Birth Certificate, Baptismal Certificate, Passports (parent's and child's if born overseas), Immunization Certificates and proof of address (council rates, drivers licence). Please be aware that we are unable to accept or process incomplete applications and note that submitting an application does not guarantee automatic placement.

Enrolment forms are required to be returned by 31st March 2020.



Happy Birthday to all the children who will celebrate their birthday in the coming week — Anton Bayssari, Phillip Ayoub, Rebecca Black, Christina Elzahoul, Logan Munro, Jessica Izmestyeva, Danielle Tannous, Edward McCloskey



*sub tuum
praesidium*

Our **VISION** is to be a child centred faith community within an innovative, interactive learning environment.

Our **MISSION** is to –

Live out the Gospel Values in a visibly Catholic tradition

Nurture students for Christian Leadership

Create a range of learning experiences which allow children to progress at their own level

Assist our students to develop into independent thinkers with a deep sense of responsibility and justice

Lead each individual towards reaching his/her potential

Generate a sense of community and compassion in which all Experience belonging.

Opportunity for all

MASS TIMETABLE FOR ST PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL PARRAMATTA

Weekend Masses

Saturday 8.00am, 6.00pm (Vigil)
Sunday 8.00am, 9.30am (Family)
11.00am (Solemn), 6.00pm

Weekday Masses

Mon to Fri 6.30am, 12.30pm
Public Hol 8.00am

Pastoral Team

Bishop of Parramatta Most Rev.

Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM CONV

Very Rev Fr Robert Bossini

Fr Christopher Del Rosario Rev Deacon Willy Limjap

Meg Gale (Sacramental Coord)

Milli Lee (Parish Admin Asst) Mindy Mercado (Youth Co-ord)

Patricia Preca (Parish Secretary) Donna Missio (Receptionist)