



# ***Our Lady of the Way Primary School***

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Dear Parents & Families,

The staff have spent their time this week busily preparing for the return to Learning from Home and are in the process of completing their preparation for 9 weeks of work. Our reason for undertaking 9 weeks of preparation is to ensure that students who aren't able to return to school for a variety of reasons at the end of the lockdown will still have access to schoolwork in order to maintain their learning.

As we enter this second phase of Learning from Home, some students and families may not feel as enthused or keen to take on the challenge as they were during the first period. I would like to reassure families that if you stick to the same processes as you did during the first period of Learning from Home, then your children will continue to learn at a very high level. All of our testing on return to school shows that students who undertook the program set increased their learning by more than the number of weeks they were Learning from Home. This was a fabulous outcome for the students, therefore we will be undertaking a similar model to last time, with a few minor changes.

During this second phase we are endeavouring to hold a daily Google Meet social catch up for each class. This 20 – 30 minute session is a '**students only**' session to give them some time to maintain contact with their teacher and classmates. It is not a compulsory session as we understand that there can be many competing priorities within each household for devices or internet access, but is offered for those are able to check in for a chat. Although parents may need to assist the younger children with logging on, please be aware that this is not a question and answer time for parents, it is a time for the students with their teacher and classmates. If you have any questions you would like to ask the teacher, please email their class teacher account and they will get back to you as soon as possible. Log in information will be sent home later today as there is a slight change to accessing the class login.

Please also be aware that the internet/NBN around Kingsbury is often plagued by issues. Our phone system has suffered from this during this week, hence the message sent out to families yesterday, and we are still suffering a little today. Therefore, we have made a ruling to save everyone's sanity, that if the teacher drops out of the Google Meet session, they will log back into the session, but if it happens 3 times during that session, they will just close the session and wait until the next day to log in and start a new session.

Many families will now be aware that our school app provider FlexiBuzz has migrated to FlexiSchools. This new platform has been inviting users to register to purchase Skoolbo. Please note that this is **not** endorsed by the school so do not purchase this program. We have been dissatisfied with this new platform for the lack of appropriate functionality and for spamming users with new products to purchase. We are currently in negotiations for a new school app provider and will notify families once we have a new app in place. In the meantime, all newsletters will still be loaded weekly to our school website at <https://www.olwkingsbury.catholic.edu.au/news-events/newsletters/> and all weekly schoolwork will be loaded to <https://www.olwkingsbury.catholic.edu.au/news-events/learning-from-home/> . Please bookmark these links as no newsletters or schoolwork will be loaded onto FlexiSchools from this point on.

Next week's Learning from Home activities will be loaded onto our school website <https://www.olwkingsbury.catholic.edu.au/news-events/learning-from-home/> tomorrow afternoon around 3.00pm in order to give families a chance to prepare for the first week of the return to Learning from Home. Future weeks will be loaded by 6.00pm Sunday evening prior, as we need to keep the previous week's work available for students until Saturday night in order to assist some families who have a variable and flexible schedule due to work commitments.

I have attached some ideas below from staff at the Australian Catholic University on how to make the most of the Learning from Home period. Many of our families used these strategies last time, but it doesn't hurt to remind everyone of them, and to be kind to yourselves.

Our school newsletter will continue to be posted on our website weekly on Monday, so feel free to keep sending in photos of your children Learning from Home. They are a great inspiration to both the staff other families and help everyone to stay connected.

Stay Safe and stay positive – you will do an amazing job again!

Yours sincerely,



Kevin Burke

## Ten tips for remote learning

Dr Matthew Zbaracki, Australian Catholic University, Head of School of Education, Victoria, and Jane Plunkett, an ACU-qualified teacher turned education consultant, have two school-aged children.

They say teachers do not expect parents to run their home like a classroom.

“It’s a very stressful time for everyone. But there is a misunderstanding about teaching at home,” Dr Zbaracki said.

“To home school in the ‘purest’ sense means the parent takes on the role of being the educator, (teacher) and provides the actual curriculum and assignments and activities”.

Dr Zbaracki said what most Victorian parents are doing now is ‘home learning’.

“The tasks are provided by the school, and the parent may assist as a guide with accomplishing them,” he said.

“Home learning provides more guidance and structure for families than true home schooling”.

Dr Zbaracki said the main goal of home learning was to keep children connected with their schoolwork and engaged in age-appropriate learning activities.

“These are unprecedented times for all of us, and Victoria is trying to cope with dramatic changes to its day-to-day existence,” he said.

“It’s important that we recognise that parents will facilitate learning in very different ways and that’s OK. When teaching children at home, parents must take the pressure off themselves.”

Dr Zbaracki and Plunkett share ten ways parents can ‘home learn’ with their children:

### **1. Set up a negotiated learning space and routine/structure.**

“One of the key things that children need in these uncertain times is structure, by setting this up in the beginning, children will be better able to focus and learn and everyone involved will know the expectations,” Dr Zbaracki said.

“Make sure the children take regular breaks depending on their age.”

Plunkett added, “During the school holidays parents can use this time to become familiar with the various learning platforms that schools may require.”

### **2. Understand the required learning tasks.**

Identify priority tasks. Print out the learning tasks, highlight key words, and add the due dates to your calendar.

### **3. Check in with your child to see how they’re doing and what they may need help with.**

Parents know their child, so a common-sense approach is best. Give both yourself and your child a break from lessons when the child is showing signs of being off-task, tired or irritable.

### **4. Integrate movement/active time in the day (working from home parents will need this for themselves too)**

“We all need to learn how to work from home and take frequent breaks,” Dr Zbaracki said. “When you take a break, get up and move around with your child, do 50 star jumps or run in place for a minute. Just like your child has a need to move and let out some energy, adults do as well.”

### **5. Older children also need to take ownership of their learning.**

Upper primary and secondary children, who have specific projects/assignments, should know the due dates and the expectations of their teachers,” Plunkett said. “Older children need to be aware of when and how to meet these deadlines. Parents can ask prompting questions to check the child understands what is required of them.”

### **6. Read every day! Read with them, to them, and have them read to you!**

### **7. Think creatively**

Cooking or baking together (or with grandma or grandpa via Facetime). Make an iMovie together for an assignment for school.

### **8. Maintain connections with others (family, friends, classmates) by sharing books, recommending books, sharing writing.**

Do this through Zoom or FaceTime so they are still able to ‘see’ their friends and family and have social interaction.

### **9. Never teach under a mood of frustration (yours or theirs) wait for calm and then work together.**

“When the child is calm, ‘share the pen’ or ‘share the reading’ which means work collaboratively,” Plunkett said.

### **10. Be flexible**

With the many distractions at home, parents need to be flexible with their expectations of their child’s behaviour. Children are not working with their regular classroom teacher or with their classmates, how they work will be different at home. Assignment outcomes will look different as well, but the goal is to keep children connected and engaged through learning.

Plunkett added, “Being flexible with your children at home is very important. Home learning can be a fun way to be more involved in what your child is learning.”