

24 March 2020

Dear Parents, Caregivers and Families,

While we are attempting to respond as best we can to advice from state authorities, let's take a breath and pause. There is no academic emergency this week, our schools remain open for parents who need to send their children to school. For those who choose to keep their children at home, take your time to understand and consider what learning at home will look like for your family. We understand you have a lot on your plate and we all need time to adjust.

Children are just as worried as we are right now. Not only can they hear everything that is going on around them, but they can feel our constant tension and anxiety. They have never experienced anything like this before. Normally the idea of being off school for weeks sounds fantastic, but most children know that this situation is not normal and the abrupt changes to all their usual routines and activities will be unsettling.

Children will adapt to this new situation very differently. Some may adjust smoothly but others may struggle. Over the coming weeks, you may see an increase in behavioural issues with your child. Whether it's anxiety, or anger, or protest that they can't do things normally - it's a natural response to your child's changing environment.

Set up your home learning space when you are ready. Don't worry if your child is not ready to start learning from home tomorrow. Some children will take longer to adjust than others. Our teachers are ready to support them whether they are experiencing their learning in the classroom or at home. When we are back in the classroom together, teachers will meet each child where they are at and support them accordingly. Teachers are experienced at this.

What we all need right now is to feel safe, comforted and loved. To feel like it's all going to be ok. And that might mean a slower transition into blended learning for your child. Take advantage of this time to slow down, and focus on connections and feelings of security for your child. During all this don't forget yourselves and your own wellbeing. To be our best for our children, we ourselves need to take time for our own mental, spiritual and emotional wellbeing.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sally Towns".

Sally Towns
Director of Catholic Schools