

# Tips for parents: Education during the Coronavirus isolation

- Prioritising well-being
- Setting targets
- Establishing and keeping to routines
- Staying connected, whilst limiting screen time
- Ensuring your child is staying safe online at home
- Staying healthy – fuel for thought!
- Staying positive, reflective and mentally healthy

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# Introduction

This current period of change presents many educational challenges and opportunities for you as a family. A week or so in, you may now be beginning to settle into a pattern or be feeling a bit overwhelmed or lost.

The aim of this presentation is to give you some tips, ideas and suggestions to make this an educationally positive time for your family, whilst prioritising well-being and staying safe online.

*Please note: This is not in any way intended to patronise. Many of you may be teachers/experts in home educating/ parents of the year, so sorry if it comes across in any other way than supportive. Supportive is my intention!*

# 1. Prioritise the well-being of your child

Children learn best through a feeling of love, security and happiness.

When stressed, anxious or on high alert, going through the motions of completing a learning task will be futile as the information or skill will not be absorbed.

Prioritise their happiness and well-being first, great learning will follow.

## 2. Set targets with your child



Example targets

What do they want to achieve over these coming weeks/ months?

What do they want to become good at?

What are they really interested in?

Teachers will be setting tasks and projects to complete – what order do they want to complete them in?

Set targets together of what you would like to achieve over the coming weeks.

What will success look like?

- To write, draw or read for at least 30 mins per day for pleasure.
- To complete all that is needed online within a limit of 3/4 hours screen time (with breaks) each day.
- To learn how to cook one additional meal per week
- To get on with learning tasks/chores without confrontation.
- To avoid procrastinating so that there is plenty of free time each day for leisure.
- To feel confident with maths
- To catch up with all learning tasks by the end of the Easter holidays



### 3. Establishing and keeping to routines

- Clear routines planned from the outset will help to manage expectations.
- The predictability of a routine can help to alleviate some of the uncertainty in these uncertain times.
- Routines can be ticking off tasks each day, agreeing to spend a certain amount of time completing different subjects each day in a timetable, or a timetable which follows the same pattern each day with some flexibility. Again, involve your child in the planning of this.
- Sticking as much as possible to the same subjects and times as the normal school day may help as a starting point.
- Often saving the more creative tasks for the afternoon works best.
- Consider a home reward system to motivate.
- Take a real interest in what they are doing.
- Involving them in household chores each day will free up some of your time to support them in their work, encourage independence and build good habits for the future.

# Example Timetable

For KS4 or higher ability students, you may wish to increase the learning time, however if working during the Easter break to catch up, staggering over time with breaks will make the learning higher quality

Before 9am	Wake up	Breakfast, get dressed
9.00 - 10.00am	Chores/Morning Walk/ planning your day	
10.00 - 11 am	Learning Time	
11.00-11.30 am	Break time	
11.30 - 12.30	Learning time	
12.30 - 1.00	Lunch	
1.00-2.00	Quiet time	Reading? Puzzle?
2.00 - 3.00	Learning time	
3.30 - 4.30	Fresh Air time	Go outside if possible (e.g. garden) or for exercise (if lock down restrictions allow)
4.30 - 5.30	Free time/TV/ Devices time	Electronics ok
5.30	Dinner	
	Bedtime	Shower, Reading time

This side can be agreed each day e.g. what the learning time will look like, what the quiet time will include etc

## 4. Stay connected, whilst limiting screen time

- One of the positives of technology and telephones is that they allow us to stay connected with friends and family and Okehampton College staff are here to support you where possible.
- Using 'Microsoft Teams' many classes and tutor groups have been set up which allow communication and group discussion
- The school email system is also a way for your child/ you to connect with your child's tutor or class teacher if help is needed.
- For leisure, consider board games via facetime e.g. Cluedo or Monopoly!
- Consider enlisting the help of relatives with free time for a remote tutoring session.

However please note – too much screen time is damaging: stress, neck/ backache, headache, sleep disturbance and irritability are common side effects, amongst others.

- Limit use of screens for TV, YouTube, Netflix and gaming etc. Encourage your child to use their daily screen time for being creative, learning and connecting with those they love. Let the technology serve them rather than addiction and reliance building on technology.





# 5. Online safety at home

Technology is great for education and social opportunities for young people during this period, but it can present risks.

## 1. Use the opportunity to chat with your child about their online safety

With children and parents spending more time at home, now is a great time to continue to chat with your child about how they are using online technology and what it means to them.

Ask them what they are doing online and what they like/dislike about the apps and services they use. If you like, discuss some 'ground rules' like how much time they spend online doing different things and what games and apps are appropriate to use. Discuss how addictive social media platforms such as 'TikTok' and 'Snap chat' can be and how they can keep a healthy relationship with them if they use them.

## 2. Remind them to report anything worrying, and how they can do this

It's important that young people always know where to go if they come across something that worries them or makes them feel uncomfortable online. This is especially important when teachers or friends (often their first point of contact when they are worried) may not be as available. This link to CEOP's '[parents and carers website](#)' offers advice such as helping them to identify a trusted adult that they can approach during this period (such as you or another adult) immediately if they have any worries or concerns.

Remind them that they can always call [Childline](#) (or other helplines such as 'The Mix') if they have any worries, big or small – whether it's something that has happened online, stress about being stuck at home, arguments with siblings or anxiety about Coronavirus. Remind them they can [report to CEOP](#) if they are worried about sexual abuse online for themselves or if they are worried about a friend.

The best thing you can do is help them feel they could talk to you if they were ever worried – and that you would never blame them for anything that might happen online.

## 3. Set up or review your parental controls

Setting parental controls can be a quick and effective tool to help protect your children online and should be installed on all devices that children use. For advice and support in setting these controls, please read the [Thinkuknow article](#).



## 6. Staying healthy - providing fuel for thought!



Encouraging healthy eating is more vital than ever for boosting the immune system. It also has a massive impact on your child's learning and mental health.

- If your child is not a lover of fruit and vegetables, where available, try slicing fruit and vegetables and place them within easy reach of your child's work space. Avoid sugary snacks and junk food as these can give the illusion of energy but result in poor concentration and a lack of energy.
- Always try to have glass of water on the desk and avoid fizzy caffeinated drinks as these too can give the illusion of energy but result in crashes in concentration levels and disrupted sleep.
- Help them to understand the simple law of cause and effect – what they put into their body has a direct impact on what it is capable of.
- Only keep healthy food in the house – this is a great time to break any junk food/ energy drink/cigarette habits/ addictions that may have crept in without your control.

Also remember to lead by example – in the long run, children do as we do, not as we say. If they see you operating good self-care, they will in turn look after themselves. Be the change you want to see in your child!

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Our children will look back on this time, in adulthood and tell their children what lessons they learnt from it.  
What will it teach your children?

- That when we stop working, there is such a richness to family life that we properly address a work life balance in the long run?
- That through a lock down, we confront things we run away from or avoid and get the root cause of discomfort in our home and relationships?
- That by clutter clearing our home (because we are so fed up with being locked down in a messy house) we can provide breathing space for new ideas and creativity?
- To really appreciate face to face contact and hugs with friends and family?
- That we are all connected, like individual waves of one ocean and that our actions have a direct impact on humanity as a whole?
- That our travel and working methods are damaging to the Earth that supports us and that nature (in this break) shows us a glimpse of what a change in our actions will look like?

Consider the valuable lessons that this experience is teaching us and discuss ideas with your child(ren).

Consider exploring the links on the 'support for parents and students' section on the Okehampton College website (and beyond).

Encourage your child to use techniques to support them (and you) in staying mentally healthy such as physical exercise outdoors and in nature, EFT tapping, mindfulness, meditation and yoga.

As a school we will do all we can to support your child in achieving their potential at this challenging time, but most importantly prioritise their wellbeing.

Please remember that this is guidance and flexibility at this time is ok too!

If you have any questions relating to this presentation, please do not hesitate to contact me:

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*Thank you.*

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