

Good afternoon St Joseph's families. While thinking of you all today, I realised that home-school communication has never been more consistent, which shows me that we can find God's blessings in many situations if we look hard enough!

This week we have been busily sending home class work for those of you who are at home. While the instructions may be easy enough to follow, sometimes just making the day work can be tricky. Here are a few tips (adapted from Understood.org) that may help:

- 1. Create a learning space.** It's important to set up a quiet, clutter-free space. Turn off the TV. Convert the kitchen table into a learning area by clearing away clutter for learning time as it helps children focus. When it's time to eat, put away the school work and use it again as a kitchen table.
- 2. Make a schedule and stick to it.** We are creatures of habit. With no school bell, children might feel like sleeping in and not get around to schoolwork. Take a look at your family's schedule and figure out the best times for learning. Here are a few questions to help you and your child come up with a schedule:
  - Does your child need a lot of help to get started? If so, think about when you, another adult, or responsible sibling is available to provide support.
  - Is there time for exercise? Going outside and taking breaks can help children focus and get more done.
  - Agreeing on when to watch TV or play computer games is important when children are learning at home.
  - Once you decide when your child will learn, identify that time as "school time" and stick with it.
- 3. Reduce distractions.** Computer games, social media, TV, toys, pets—our homes have lots of distractions. Make a list of the things that distract your child. Then, find ways to limit them during learning time.
- 4. Use a calendar and colour-code it.** It's important to help your child stay on top of school deadlines. This will help them stay organised. Mark a calendar with due dates. Help your child plan backwards from the due dates. You may want to use visual organisers to break an assignment down into steps and the specific strategies needed to complete it. You can also use colour-coding for tasks. For example, use a red pen for literacy and a blue pen for maths.
- 5. Get plenty of exercise.** Exercise helps us think better. When we move, our problem-solving, memory, and attention improve. Physical activity is a natural way to reduce stress and prevent anxiety. Experts say that when we move and get our heart rate up, it has a positive impact on how we think. Identify a time and place in your home for physical activity. The best time to exercise might be right before tackling schoolwork. It's also good to take exercise breaks throughout the day.
- 6. Communicate with your child's teacher.** Learning at home requires support. If you're not sure how to do an assignment, don't just guess—reach out to confirm. We are looking at setting up a day and time each week for families to connect with teachers. You can use this time to talk about the challenges your child is facing, review upcoming instruction, and understand expectations.
- 7. Look for ways to remove learning barriers.** If your child has learning challenges, here are some questions to consider:
  - What options are there for struggling readers with written material?
  - How can your child demonstrate understanding? For example, if your child has trouble writing, can they send a recorded response?
  - Ask your child's teacher about supports to help kids with things like getting organised, identifying the main idea and taking notes.
  - Remember: If it's a challenge for your child, it's most likely a problem for other kids, too.
- 8. Lastly, remember that we are in the hands of a loving God:** Jesus told his disciples, "Don't let this throw you. You trust God, don't you? Trust me. (John 14:1)

God bless and take care

Jane Olsen  
(Acting Principal)