

Dear Junior School Parents

Welcome back to the Trinity Term. I trust it has been a good start and that your daughters are enjoying engaging with their teachers more as well as managing the work and activities assigned to them on their schedules. We did experience a few hiccups on Wednesday morning with girls who weren't ready to start the new term. These were quickly addressed by the teachers and we are confident that everyone is online now and has accessed their timetables and weekly schedules on the Distance Learning Portal available on the school website or directly via this URL:

<http://www.stmarys.pta.school.za/distancelearning>.

Establishing a good routine and being self-disciplined contribute significantly to academic success. We are aware that this is an aspect of schooling that some of our girls need further guidance on to feel confident and successful while working online.

- ◇ We encourage all our girls to get up and to dress in time to start the academic day at 07:30, just like they would if they were coming to school. Some girls might like to get dressed in their school uniform to make it feel more like school.
- ◇ Planning is an essential part of learning. Please read the schedules with your daughter in preparation for the week ahead, in case you need to find something around the home to aid learning.
- ◇ Encourage your daughter to follow the assigned timetable so that she knows when to change lessons. This will ensure she connects with her teachers when they host live lessons and she can ask questions while everyone is online together.

In addition to establishing a good study routine, our girls need to get the required number of hours sleep to be able to perform optimally when learning. It is recommended that primary school children get between 8 and 10 hours of sleep a night. It has come to our attention that some girls have not yet switched from holiday bedtimes to school bedtimes. It is very important that these routines are established. We also request that devices are removed from the girls' bedrooms to ensure they get a good night's sleep ahead of the next school day.

The girls are quick to learn the functionality of these different platforms and some have already established their own private teams on Microsoft Teams. This is not encouraged by the School and we request that parents please assist us in managing this aspect from home. We are able to track the girls' use of the platforms and will hold the girls accountable to the policy that has been signed in terms of their online behaviour. We will also continue to educate the girls on these matters during our form times. Girls are sharing inappropriate content with each other and excluding girls from these private teams. The same is happening on the other social media platforms you have given your daughter access to, despite all our girls being underage for WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Tik-Tok, etc. The School is able to retrieve the conversations held on Teams, should a disciplinary matter need to be handled, but we would rather manage this proactively than reactively. Collectively, we have a wonderful opportunity here to educate our girls on these matters and to provide them with the digital literacy skills they will need in the future. We will share tips weekly through this newsletter on ways to keep your daughters digitally safe.

I asked Mrs Riandie Marais to share some guidelines with you this week on how children learn, which we hope will assist you as you facilitate your daughter's learning at home.

Why it is okay for your daughter to make mistakes and not understand everything the first time?

As we embark on this new chapter of 2020, we are so thankful for the teamwork and unity of our community. Parents, staff members and learners are truly taking hands to tackle what the next while brings.

As we continue with the curriculum in term two, new content and concepts are being shared in a variety of ways. As educators, we know that all children learn in different ways and that concepts can take time to 'sink in' and 'make sense'. Learning is more than just hearing or seeing something once and storing it forever in memory. It is about fully understanding a concept, linking it to past knowledge and experiences and being able to access it when needed in the future. As educators, we know this and we plan for this – we don't expect or demand perfection, but rather practice, in order to learn.

When we as adults approach a task, we approach it with the fullness of our experience and knowledge that we have obtained. This experience and knowledge can, however, skew our expectation of children, because it can make us forget a few things - for example:

- ◇ That it was hard remembering the difference between a rectangle and triangle
- ◇ That it was hard to know how to divide or remember times tables
- ◇ That it was hard to learn something new – even if adults said it was easy

We know that this is an incredibly tough time for parents, who now have to wear many different 'hats.' We do not want to add to this load, but rather to help you adjust your expectations of your daughter and in so doing, lighten the load for both of you. As such, we have put together a few suggestions:

- ◇ The importance of making mistakes:
When working with your daughter or checking the work she submits, allow her to learn by making mistakes, trying out her new knowledge and understanding without fear of failure and reprimand. It truly is okay for her not to get everything right the first time – that is exactly what is meant by learning.
- ◇ The necessity of independent work:
Let her submit work that she has done herself, just as it is, even if you feel it isn't perfect, because this helps us monitor what your daughter understands and to plan our lessons and support accordingly.
- ◇ Teamwork and appreciation:
Know that we are thankful for every minute of the day you spend engaging with and assisting your daughter with her. Know too that we don't expect perfection. We have been in education for a long time and know what learning looks like – we will walk beside you in this journey.



- ◇ What to take away from all this:
Your daughter will not get it right all the time, she will make mistakes and that is okay, because that is part of learning too.

Stay connected via the School's Social Media platforms

Facebook - <http://www.stmarys.pta.school.za/>

Instagram - @stmarysdsapta

Communication sent this week

- ◇ Online and Cybersecurity Policy - [Online and Cybersecurity Policy](#)
(All families are required to complete this online form for each daughter. Please submit your forms online by Friday, 15 May.)
- ◇ Term 2 Welcome letter - D6 Communicator ⇒ Resources ⇒ Grade ...
- ◇ Personal emails sent to parents from their daughter's class or form teacher
- ◇ FAQ Document - D6 Communicator ⇒ Resources ⇒ Junior School FAQ



Kind regards

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