

Westminster Christian School

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Educating for Time and Eternity

9th April 2020

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

To be leading Westminster Christian School is an honour and a privilege. Taking on the role of the principal in the current situation will no doubt be a challenge. However, I feel incredibly blessed at this time to be working alongside the Senior Leadership Team and Staff, who are passionate and committed to engaging your children in their learning. Our teaching teams have been planning their 'distance learning' programmes ready for the start of Term 2 on the 15th of April.

This is a new experience for everyone and we know that if the lockdown situation is extended we will need to reflect, refine and respond to feedback.

In planning the structure for our 'distance learning' we have tried to be mindful of the many different situations that both our teachers and students find themselves in. We know that many of you are working from home and that we shouldn't expect you to act as 'teachers' in the way that we do. We also recognise that many of our teaching staff have their own children and preschoolers to supervise in the course of their day while also teaching the students in their class. 'Distance learning' cannot be a replication of what usually happens at school, but will be a flexible and agile learning programme that supports a range of different family situations.

So what can you expect in the Westminster Distance Learning' programme?

Core programme

On the first day of each week, classroom teachers will share the Literacy, Maths and Inquiry-based work for the week. We are taking a week-long approach so that families can set a timetable and routine that works for them across the week. We will also be introducing enrichment activities to extend those students who wish to be extended.

- As school starts back on Wednesday 15th April - the first block of work set by your child's teacher will be sent out on Wednesday 15th April and will be for 3 days.

Teachers will be in contact with parents to confirm the times when teachers are available to meet with students and parents via Google- Meet for a live Q & A. This is an opportunity for students to connect with their teacher in real-time and get support with the work that has been set.

- The first live Google Meet Q & A session will be on Wednesday 15th April at 10 am.

From week 2 (20th April) onwards teachers may also offer a live teaching workshop each day as appropriate to the learning needs of their class. The days and times for these workshops will be communicated ahead of time. To fit in with family schedules, these are not compulsory but come highly recommended.

For privacy reasons these live sessions will **not** be recorded by the teacher and we also ask that students/families do **not** record live sessions.

We also request that parents are not involved in these sessions as we want to continue to reinforce self-management and learning responsibility for our students.

Please feel free to contact your child's teacher should you have any questions. I am also available to answer any questions you may have via email. Once we have eased into the new term, we will start to adapt and refine our programmes, however, please note that as we start the term no new concepts will be introduced. This time will be spent familiarizing ourselves with a new system of distance learning delivery and revisiting content from Term 1. I would also like to emphasise that we are working hard to maintain the special character of our school and our biblical view, as we strive to offer 'Education for Time and Eternity' for all our students.

To conclude, I would like to reiterate the importance of creating a routine that works for your family. Please refer back to the schedule that Mr Wilson sent out at the end of Term 2. Continue with daily devotions, taking time out in the garden for exercise, and enjoy this time together with your precious children.

On a personal note, I have changed the wording of 'being in lockdown' to 'being in my sanctuary.' This time will pass, and when we look back in reflection I am sure we will see how this experience has strengthened us as a community. Isaiah 41 verse 10 is a great source of strength as we are told not to be afraid nor discouraged, as the Lord is with us, and will strengthen us, lifting us up with His right hand.

May our Lord continue to bless you and keep you safe as we journey through these challenging times. I hope you all have a blessed Easter, I will be in touch again once school reopens on Wednesday the 15th of April, albeit online.

Kind regards

Sandra Jacobs
Principal
Westminster Christian School