



Gunnedah South Public School

Winder Place, Gunnedah, NSW 2380

A message from our School Principal 6-4-2020

Please take the time to read the whole message.

Dear South Parent / Caregiver,

Thank you for your amazing support of our students and school staff over the past two weeks as we changed our entire focus from face-to-face learning to at home learning. We all know that we are in this challenge against COVID-19 together for the long haul and I thank parent/s and carers for your fantastic effort in helping our entire local community with keeping children safe at home. Remember learning can happen anywhere and with the massive contribution of \$62,000 towards our significant laptop purchase from our P&C every student will have access to a school student laptop from the start of Term 2. This will remove many obstacles for students and provide a tool (not a toy) for students to learn at home.

The most recent government direction and advice is in place until the 29th of June (Week 10 of Term 2). Our school will remain open in Term 2, however we urge parents to please keep children at home for all of Term 2. The reason we remain open is to ensure children of doctors, nurses, hospital workers and other essential services like supermarkets can continue to support our community. Please remember there is no direct teaching at school, the work is the same for all children; whether they are at home or at school.

If parents have a day off work, we urge you to keep your children at home for that day. Students will have work at home. The only way we will have success is if we as a community are physically separated for a while. Our school will have very few staff on site in Term 2. We are all doing our part in slow the spread of COVID-19. Our teachers and support staff are also acting responsibly and working remotely, wherever possible. Likewise, please keep your kids safe at home.

Over the coming days, weeks and months, you may see an increase in behavioural issues with your children. Whether it's anxiety, or anger, or protest that they can't do things as they have been done in the past- it will happen. You'll might see meltdowns, tantrums, and oppositional behaviour in the short term. This is children simply adjusting to the new normal and is completely expected under these circumstances. Please be patient.

What children need right now is to feel comforted and loved. Their health and wellbeing is what is most important at this time. They need to feel like it's all going to be okay. This might mean that you tear up your perfect schedule and spend quality time with your children. Suggestions include:

- play outside and go on appropriately socially distanced walks;
- bake cookies or cakes
- paint or draw pictures;
- play board games;
- watch movies;
- do a science experiment together or find virtual field trips of the zoo;
- dedicate time just to talk with your kids
- start a book and read together as a family.

Please do not be too concerned about the progress, or perceived lack of progress, in relation to school work. Every single child is in the same situation and they all will be okay. Teachers will continue to support every child's learning throughout Term 2. Furthermore, when we are back in the classroom, we will work with every single child to correct and meet their individual academic needs. Teachers are experts at this! We are already planning long term to support all students at South with interventions occurring through our dedicated learning support team from Week 3 of next term. We are about success for every student.

As with homework, we don't want there to be stress and anxiety at home. Please don't push your children because they don't want to do maths. Don't show frustration if they are not following the schedule. Don't mandate two hours of learning time if they are resisting it.

If I can leave you with one thing, it's this: at the end of all of this, your kids' mental health will be more important than their academic skills. And how they felt during this time will stay with them long after the memory of what they did during this time is gone. So, keep in mind, every single day – you are the person that will make a difference for your child today. Simply remember to love your kids and learning will happen!

I sincerely thank you for your effort. We are all in this together and with your assistance we will get through this as a community. Please stay safely at home.

Kindest regards,

Pete (aka Mr B)