

Tipperary Education and Training Board (TETB)



Tips to Support Parents and Students while at home due to Covid-19/Coronavirus Pandemic



Introduction

This is a challenging time for parents, children and the entire community. Remember that we are resilient, we each have within ourselves the capacity to cope and we will come through this. Give yourself and your family some time to get used to what you might need at this time. This too will pass, and we will be all the stronger for it when we work together. If you need any support, there is a list of resources on the Tipperary ETB website <http://tipperary.etb.ie/home/covid-19-information/> which should help at this time. Here are some tips which might also help:

Tips to support students while at home due to the Coronavirus Pandemic

Although the precautionary measures to contain the spread of the new coronavirus and Covid-19 are efforts to protect the community, the notification of your child's school closing may have come as an unexpected shock. Students thrive on routine and predictability, both of which are in short supply right now for families across the country and well beyond. Despite the uncertainty in the community, you still can try to foster an environment that includes as much routine and predictability as possible. Below are some tips to manage children's increased time at home. Inform yourself about the symptoms of Covid-19 and how you can play your part in helping to prevent the spread of the virus. When looking for information about Covid-19 and Coronavirus, make sure you go the trusted sources of information such as the Health Service Executive: <https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/> and the Health Protection Surveillance Centre: <https://www.hpsc.ie/> to ensure that you are always getting the correct information as there is a lot of other misinformation about.

Validate first and celebrate daily success

Before offering some tips on how to manage the day-to-day, it is important to validate both your and your children's experiences. Validation acknowledges how a person is feeling without agreeing or disagreeing. It shows children and adults that they are heard and helps them manage their emotions.

Acknowledge for your children that it may be frustrating, disappointing, and sad that activities have been cancelled or postponed. It also may be stressful because none of us are sure when the return to more typical routines will happen. Let your children know that it is okay to have these feelings, and the family is going to do its best to make the most of these changes. Using "and" rather than "but" accepts both thoughts.

Like your children, you also deserve validation. These changes have likely turned your world upside down without sufficient time to prepare. You can feel exasperated, fearful and worried even when you're trying to make the most of these experiences.

Keep a consistent routine especially from Monday - Friday

It may not seem like a certainty right now, but schools will re-open at some point, perhaps sooner in some communities than in others. Sticking with a routine similar to the one practiced for typical school days will help make any return to school smoother, as well as give shape to each day. Try to keep the morning and bedtime routines the same as if you are preparing for school. Keeping meal times the same also can help.

Create a daily schedule that is structured for your children. You can foster a sense of collaboration and control for them by creating a list of activities and allowing your children to work with for example the school daily timetable. Supporting them to have some choice can also help, for example, they can choose during which time block of time they do maths, science, etc.

If more than one adult is at home or working from home, it might be helpful to coordinate your schedules as best you can to monitor and review the agreed schedule when needed.

Have a plan for screen time use

Screens may be in use more often now if your children are using online learning programs and virtual classrooms. It would also be useful to develop a screen time plan for after-school hours. Your plan should focus on limits to recreational screen time, such as the use of video games. Review and agree any screen time plan and limits with your family now to avoid potential attempts to negotiate and argue later.

Be healthy and creative with socialising

Technology also allows us to get creative with social interactions to help prevent feeling lonely or left out, while still adhering to social distancing guidelines. Schedule virtual peer get-togethers and face type calls with family members during after-school hours. Online platforms and Apps allow students to have virtual group hangouts, so there are still ways to remain connected to others while staving off loneliness and isolation. This differs from online games that allow users to interact with unknown players. It's important to monitor any virtual interactions that your children are having to make sure those on the other end are appropriate connections.

Parents might also connect with fellow parents online or by phone, to support the schedule and to simply talk with one another. Remember that you are not alone; we are in this together and doing our part as a community to keep everyone as healthy as possible.

It may be difficult to meet friends in the coming days and weeks. If its possible take exercise in pairs only and in open country areas while keeping social distance of at least two metres apart. Do not meet in groups.

While our routines are no longer quite the same, this is a good opportunity to do something different which you may not have had time for before like that project you never got around to starting, the unread book, or another creative interest.

Eat a healthy balanced diet, fruit, vegetables, water. Being fit and healthy will help you all cope in the weeks ahead.

Rest and sleep is vital to help the body retain and build your strength as this will be vital.

For ongoing information about the new coronavirus and Covid-19, see the HSE website: <https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/>

SAMPLE ROUTINE

8.00 a.m.	Wake up, get up, stretch and have breakfast
8.30 a.m.	Relaxation exercise: Yoga/Meditation
9.00 a.m. – 12.00 p.m.	Home Study: follow school timetable taking a 10 minute break between classes and a 15 minute morning break
12.30 p.m. – 1.00 p.m.	Exercise to keep fit: Go for a run, play hurling, soccer etc.; Stay hydrated; Walk outside in your garden for fresh air; Play with pets etc.
1.30 p.m.	Lunch
2.00 p.m. – 3.00 p.m.	Home Study
3.00 p.m. – 4.00 p.m.	House Chores: Designate an activity or room to clean
4.00 p.m. – 5.00 p.m.	Hobby Time: Bake; Art; Gardening; Reading (Vary it daily)
5.00 p.m. – 6.00 p.m.	Fun Time: Movie/Board Game/Social Media
6.00 p.m. – 7.00 p.m.	Dinner and Wash up
7.00 p.m. – 9.00 p.m.	Winding down time; reading; relaxing
10.30 p.m. – 11.00 p.m.	Bedtime routine
11.00 p.m.	Bed