



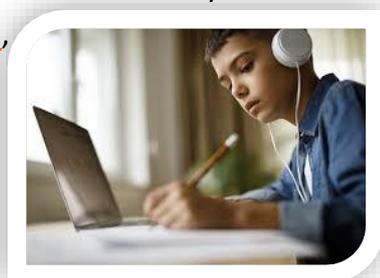
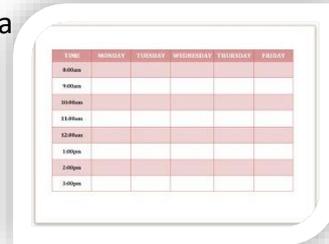
Top Tips for Parents and Carers Engaging Students in Virtual School



As we continue down this challenging path of Virtual School, many students are struggling to engage themselves in home learning and successfully complete their week's work at home. Parents and carers too, are finding the strange role of Home School Teacher very difficult to manage. This is uncharted territory for most, it doesn't come easily or naturally for adults to teach their own children while maintaining all the other jobs they do, it can be both frustrating and stressful and all parties often give up.

Don't despair! There are some suggestions below of how to encourage your secondary school child to engage in their own learning, something they probably do readily, every single school day during normal times.

1. Either together with your child or as a task for your teen to do independently, **create a timetable** that falls in line with a normal school day – plan breaks and lunchtime too. It is hard to believe that school would be up and running by 8.30 at the very latest in September – Year 7 would have a lesson under their belts by this time. Getting up and getting on with things means that free time and relaxing can be a reward when the work is done.
2. **Get organised.** Create a list of tasks they will need to complete by the end of the day. Choose a simple task to do first – sometimes starting is the very hardest thing to do, some people enjoy crossing tasks off a list and it can be a visual incentive to keep going. Try to discourage leaving the hardest task until last, by that time your child's enthusiasm and energy will be low and they are much more likely to give up.
3. **Help them find a suitable space.** If you can, create an environment for them that helps them concentrate – noise, hustle and bustle, siblings can all distract the student from their work. If space is a problem, headphones can help to stay focussed. Sit them by a window for good light and at a table if possible, it is helpful for them to be able to walk away from school work when they are done for the day.
4. Remember that **children learn at their own pace**, they won't necessarily get everything done without rushing, skipping steps or turning in incomplete and poorly executed work. Teachers prefer one planned



and well prepared piece of work than 5 rushed, messy and incorrect ones.

5. If you have time, **make your child the teacher** and have them explain to you what they have completed. Something they do regularly in class is feedback ideas to their teacher and engage in whole class discussion, we cannot replicate this right now but if they have someone else to bounce off ideas with, someone who is interested and engaged in what they have to say, it can help to cement their learning.

It is also a huge confidence boost, the demands on students in school are great, they jump through a wide variety of lessons at a fast pace, they know an impressive amount of things!



6. **Be encouraging and kind.** This whole situation is really frustrating and worrying for everyone concerned and we all really want life to go back to normal. We are asking students to complete work independently, with all the distractions of home and the uncertainty of the world going on right now, in difficult circumstances. They need positive reinforcement to help build them up into independent homeschool students, look for things to praise them about; reading, getting up earlier, neat handwriting, logging onto Teams and making a start.
7. **Ask for help when you need it.** We would always encourage a student to ask for help in the classroom – teachers are logged on in Teams everyday, we are there to help you and your child manage their work and ask for help. Keeping in contact reassures teachers and students that at some point, school will be back to normal.
8. **Reward engagement.** Genuine praise for a real success goes a long way to encourage students. Rewards don't need to be objects, choosing a film to watch or a favourite meal to cook can be powerful too.

It's useful to remember that at some point in the near future, your homeschool student will return to school and be reintegrated into the National Curriculum, that is a job for teachers to deal with when it happens. You are not expected to provide a full curriculum while coping with everything that is happening in the world right now. At times like these, just do the basics:

- **Make sure they are getting enough sleep**
- **Ensure they are eating properly**
- **Encourage a bit of structure**
- **Ensure family harmony**
- **Have a go at Virtual School**

