

St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Primary School

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Dear Parents/Guardians,

Coronavirus Update

I hope that you are all keeping safe and well. I'm sure that many of you will share my feelings that everything is quite surreal at the moment. Over the course of a few weeks, all of our lives have changed.

When we broke up from school, the SLT had to put plans in place immediately. Everyone did their best in the circumstances, without knowing quite what the right thing to do was. We have now had time to regroup and are putting in place some longer-term plans. Before we get to that, I think it is important that you are all clear on our expectations.

Home-schooling

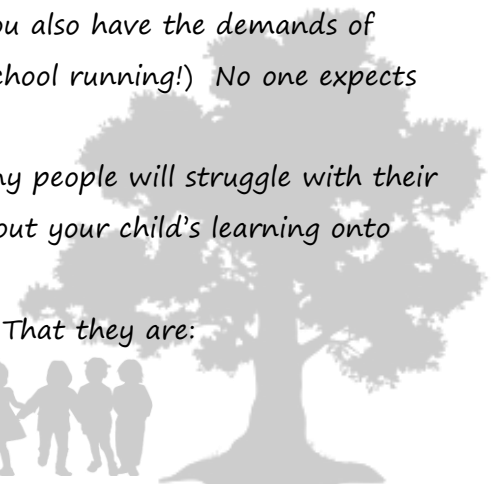
Your key priority at this time is keeping yourself, your children and those you love, safe and healthy. Nothing is more important than that.

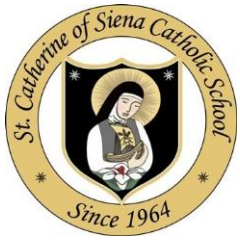
I know that there are so many factors causing stress and anxiety to families: the worry about the virus itself; concerns for highly vulnerable family members; money issues due to lost work; pressures of having children cooped up together; friction caused by adults being cooped up together; juggling home working with limited facilities, to name a few. The last thing that you need on top of that is to worry about home-schooling your children. However, I am aware that many parents are allowing this to be an additional cause of anxiety.

I'm writing to explain my position on this.

1. We are all winging it! The word 'unprecedented' has been used more times in the past few weeks than ever before, for a reason. Don't let social media fool you into thinking that other people know what they are doing – they don't, teachers included!
2. You are not teachers. (And for the few of you who are, you also have the demands of Heads expecting you to work from home or to keep the school running!) No one expects you to do the job of a teacher, all you can do is your best.
3. Try to lose your parental guilt. You cannot do it all. Many people will struggle with their own mental health during this time. Do not add guilt about your child's learning onto that. Focus on what is important.

4. As a school, our priorities for our children are as follows. That they are:





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- Learning

Our priorities are in that order for a reason. Learning only happens after the other two are in place. During this period, I want your children to be safe and happy more than I want them to learn.

- 5. The activities that we send home are just that – activities. They can be used to give you and the kids some kind of structure and starting point. However, if you want to ignore them, do! No one will be judging you or checking up on you when the children come back to school.*
- 6. This is a marathon, not a sprint. Realistically, it looks like we could be doing this for a long time. Whatever you have put into place, make sure it is manageable for the whole family over the long-term. Any teacher will tell you how hard and long a term is – don't burn out too quickly!*
- 7. Adapt to your child/children's needs. We don't advertise it to parents, but there are occasional times at school when we have no option but to scrap all attempts at learning and adopt a 'just get through the day' attitude! If the kids aren't able to focus, switch it up – play football, watch TV or play a game. Tomorrow is another day.*
- 8. Do what you need to do. If you have to log a certain number of hours while working from home to keep your job, that is far more important than IXL. Remote working and home-schooling don't go well together – we understand that.*

We hope that this will be a once in a lifetime event. It is hard to find a silver lining in such a tragedy, but we must look for blessings where we can. You will probably never have as much 'quality time' with your family as you do now. Try to enjoy it.

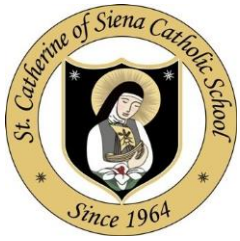
As an SLT we are already making plans to ensure that every child achieves their full potential next year. We know that they will all be at different stages and we will work to close any gaps. Providing for that is my job. Carrying out those plans are the teachers' jobs. Your job is to stay happy, health and sane!

Home Learning

Every two weeks we will be sending out a table of Home Learning activities. We have included all areas of the curriculum so that there is variety. These are simply suggestions to help anyone who wants ideas – they are not compulsory. If you are already overwhelmed, please don't even open the page. If you do, you will find that a lot of the ideas are easier than you think – we have tried to make it user friendly.

Teachers will also send out suggestions for the Core subjects of English, Maths and Science. These are aimed at keeping the children (and you!) occupied. We are a Catholic school – Religious





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Education is the Core of the Cores for us. Please do use this time to pray together as a family – the world has never needed prayers more.

Stay safe. Stay healthy. Stay in good humour. Stay sane.

God bless,

Nikki Kane



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