



LYNDHURST SECONDARY COLLEGE

Dear Parents/Carers and Students;

As we move into our sixth week of remote learning, we are all learning how to deal with being in lock down and 'adjusted learning environments'. We did this in term 2 and we have managed this for the last 5 weeks or so. We know what works best, but we also know how challenging it is adjusting to this new 'normal' while navigating tougher restrictions. Change, by definition, requires us to adapt which can bring with it extra stress, anxiety and emotional distress for some of us. Please reach out if you need support or just someone to listen to. We can connect you with services that can help.

It is timely for us to reflect on a few key strategies that can hopefully support us as we navigate through these challenging times.

Connection and Communication

Some students are thriving in the virtual classroom environment while learning at home. Others really miss seeing their friends and interacting with their teachers at school. The social isolation is something that you and your child/ren may be finding extremely difficult. This is where connection and communication is important. Before your child or young adult is able to learn, connection and communication needs to occur first.

Our children need to be heard. When children/young adults become upset or moody, we as parents tend to meet them where they are at. When they start to struggle, we start to mirror their emotions. We catch their cranky and their chaos. It can be contagious. We as adults and parents need to stay calm in order for them to mirror our emotions and to help them to calm. We can say things like: 'I can see you're feeling really frustrated right now – would you like me to sit with you or would you like some space? Once they are calm and connected with you, then it's easier to say things like: "What can I do to help?" or "How could we fix this together?" By allowing our child/ren to feel heard and connected, they will be in a better position to think and communicate rationally and clearly.

Having said this, everyone is going to be experiencing this time differently, so there is no single solution to staying connected. There are many ways to stay connected through social media, playing games, emails etc. Our whole school event days and our Connect newsletter provide another opportunity for us to stay connected. It is great to see many of our students participating in the Lyndhurst Fitness Challenge - working together while competing against the staff. Have a look at this week's Connect newsletter to see who is winning! This coming week we also have Fitness Tuesday and your teachers will be sharing some fun activities for students to do either with their family, with their class, independently, or a mixture of all three – this should be a fun day. We also have our Wellbeing Wednesday scheduled for 9th of September and there will be a number of activities planned. Just as in Term 2, classes will not run as normal, but there will be plenty of Wellbeing activities for students and families to engage in. More information to follow.

There may also be times when you or your child/ren need to reach out to someone else outside of the family too. It is important to be flexible about how our children connect to their 'people', and when appropriate, to encourage them to talk to a trusted person about their feelings and concerns. You might ask, "Who else can you turn to when needing help with your learning?" "Who else can you turn to for support when you are feeling upset?" "Who else can you reach out to?"

With many of us not being able to enjoy being at school and the easy communication and sense of connection that comes with it, we can all still communicate. Please do not hesitate to reach out to your child's teacher or sub school team if you have any questions or concerns about your child's wellbeing or progress. We are here to help!

Routine and Security

Making sure that the basic needs of your child or young adult are being met improves learning. Children and young adults need a sense of security, healthy eating and hydration, physical activity, good sleep and down time. Assisting them to recover from disappointment and staying calm when uncertainties loom helps them build their confidence and resilience.

Routines are an important element of enhancing feelings of security. It is extremely beneficial to develop a general structure to the day that involves dedicated but flexible learning time, social time, recreation and down time. Regular sleep cycles and exercise breaks are also important as is making sure they drink plenty of water. Family routines such as shared mealtimes can also be a great time to check in on each other.

As a significant part of the school day currently involves your child working via E-learning, it is important to identify a specific space for them to work in other than their bedroom. This supports connection with your child as well as allows some supervision while on devices. Every home is different, but it is important to provide a quiet and comfortable space for your child to learn in, where possible.

Monitoring and Resources

Adjusting to change takes a great deal of personal energy. Your child/ren may become tired, grumpy, and even moody at home. The current environment is producing a great deal of uncertainty for all of us and many of our students will be understandably upset or disappointed about missing out on planned events and social occasions. It's important that we acknowledge that these are normal responses to the situation and recognise feelings such as anger and anxiety. Validating your child's feelings will help them feel safe and secure. It's a good idea to regularly monitor your child's wellbeing, and we encourage you to start and finish each day with a simple check-in. If your child is experiencing ongoing feelings of distress, or you feel that they're not coping, you can call on their Sub School Team and our Wellbeing team to support them. Together we can get through this challenging time and meet back in person on the other side of this.

Year 12

We recognise the particular challenges that Year 12 students face this year. The stress of studies, the lack of immediate assistance from their teachers, and missing out on the socialising, connections and events that make Year 12 special. We are thinking of our Year 12s and want them to know that we are doing everything we can to support them. We plan to do as much as we can to commemorate their final year in Term 4, as much as we are allowed to. Some SACs and VCAL assessments may take place on site if your classroom teachers believe that is the most appropriate

course of action. More details will be provided by your teachers directly including protocols that will be in place to keep everybody safe.

We also have something special being delivered to all of our Year 12s this week, just to show them how much we care and that we recognise the tough year that 2020 is. Please send in pictures once you receive it to our email at: Lyndhurst.sc@education.vic.gov.au These can then be included in our Connect newsletter and shared with our community.

Finally, Ms Lauren Shaw is also working with our School Captains and will survey our Year 12 students to gain some ideas on how they would like to celebrate next term, within whatever restrictions we are dealing with. We encourage all Year 12 students to respond to the survey.

I would like to once again thank our whole school community for continuing to work together, supporting each other as we navigate through these challenges together.

Stay Safe everyone,

Konnie Prades

Principal

23rd August, 2020