



## Learning from Home Extension

### Moving Into Our “Long Term Precautionary Planning/Learning from Home Procedures”

Tuesday, August 31, 2021

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

On Thursday last week, the Premier announced that stay-at-home orders for regional NSW have been extended for an additional two weeks. This means that we will continue *Learning From Home* until at least Friday September 10, 2021.

I would like to thank and acknowledge the hard work of our Merimbula Public School staff, their commitment to supporting the wellbeing of all students and families, and to communicating and collaborating with our parents, caregivers, families and entire school community - to ensure that the weeks ahead are as supportive and educationally valuable as can be during this difficult time.

To our parents, caregivers and P&C, you are amazing! Your continued efforts in supporting your children, our students, staff and school is beyond commendable. As always!

Our school appreciates the collaboration taking place and the positive feedback and suggestions we have received! We have taken this on board as planned, and we also have plans for moving forward, in align with the changes announced, and in response to your feedback and the needs of your children and families. We also have plans if *Learning from Home* continues beyond September 10, as well as, plans to support students should learning onsite resume from that time.

#### Introducing Some Technology and Device Loans

Based on survey feedback, we have begun implementing additional technology, technology support and have provided devices to families who require them – to compliment our wellbeing activities, paper-based learning resources and teacher-parent-student communication. Our School Learning Support Officers (SLSOs/teacher's aids) and Learning Support Teachers will also work with your children, and regular intervention groups in literacy/reading, numeracy/mathematics, to further support our students as part of our *Learning from Home* experience.

We thank all parents, caregivers and families for supporting our students to ease into the *Learning from Home* experience with a focus on their wellbeing. Of course, literacy, numeracy and extra-curricular outcomes have always been a focus – but without wellbeing, developing resilience and the confidence to move forward in changing times (whilst having fun!), it can all become too much!

We are still distributing Chromebooks to families that have expressed that they have a need for technology within their homes. We thank you for communicating with us so that we can assist in this regard. We are always here to support you and your children. If you still require a device for your family, please let us know. There are more available. Should *Learning from Home* continue beyond September 10, devices that have not been allocated will be able to be distributed to larger families, giving some families access to a second device.



The Department of Education has device loan documentation that will need to be completed prior to device distribution. These forms are located on our website in our '*Communications Section*'. Click on the 'Communications' link, select 2021, Term 3, then go into the 'Learning from Home' section and choose the document: "**Technology Device Loan Agreement 26.8.21**". Spare forms will also be available at school for completion. Forms must be signed by a parent/caregiver and the student/s using the device, prior to a Chromebook being loaned from the Department. Signing a form at home may save you time, and save your child coming in to school.

Based on the *Learning from Home* technology survey results, that were returned in the last two weeks, around 70 devices have already been loaned out to students or are labelled, ready for collection.

Device collection will take place via our bus bay, between 9.30am and 2.00pm (weather permitting, when the front of the school/Randolph Street is not a bus zone). If a device has been allocated for your child, or is allocated later this week, you will receive a call regarding when to collect your child's device. Your collection day can be negotiated, provided that collection times can be spread out for the safety of everyone in our community.

### **To collect your child's device, please:**

- Read through the Department of Education's required "Technology Device Loan Agreement 26.8.21" on our website, prior to coming to school. If you do not get the chance to do this, you will have to do so on arrival (we apologise if this extends the wait time of our families, another reason why we are spacing out our collection times);
- If reading the agreement, or if you have read it, you will need to sign it (using one of 'Unused pens' placed on the collection table (where the forms are) near our Administration Office gate;
- Please remain in your car during the specified hours (non-bus-bay times), until you are at the front of the queue;
- This could also be a good time to drop off your child's previously completed (or part completed) work pack/s for feedback;
- Please, stay in your car while waiting. If you see a staff member, let them know the name/s and class/es of your child (at this stage we will be providing one device for families in need only, to ensure equitable distribution. More devices may be shared with larger families should they be available and needed, in the week/s ahead. If you cannot see a staff member, please use the sanitiser provided then press the buzzer near the gate;
- The staff member will let you know to sign the agreement, whilst they collect your child's pre-loaned device from the office;
- Please return used pens to the "used" cup. Sanitiser will again be available for your convenience/the safety of all;
- Device distribution will be contactless. You will need to remain in your car until your family's/child's device is placed on the table near the front gate, ready for collection.

If you have not already returned your child's/family's 'Learning from Home Technology Survey', yet need to loan a device, please email the school and someone will get in touch with you to support you in accessing a device for your child.



## What Will Long Term Learning From Home Look Like?

### We are excited to be offering:

- **Google Classrooms - Students:** Google Classrooms will be utilised by students, as an alternative to paper-based learning in Years 3 to 6, and to compliment learning in K-2. Students in K-2 will still have paper-based work posted home each week (as will students in Years 3 to 6 who do not have wifi or printers). Students in learning support intervention groups will access this support via their usual Google Classroom (or paper-based work pack). We are awaiting Department allocation of wifi dongles for the families who do not have wifi. We will contact these families, directly, once the resources arrive;
- **Google Classrooms – Student Communication:** Google Classrooms can be used for direct communication between students and their teacher/s (in addition to Class Dojo, phone calls and other forms of communication between parents/caregivers and staff);
- **Video recordings of activities and teacher explanations:** Video recordings will be used to support students in engaging with their *Learning from Home* tasks. These will be accessible via Google Classrooms, and in some instances via Class Dojo for parents/caregivers of K-2 children;
- **Flexibility in the time your child completes their *Learning from Home*:** Tasks will be set for students each day. When they access their tasks and teacher support will be tailored around the needs of your family! If it's sunny at 10am, but it's going to rain at 2pm – fit your PE and sport in then, or take a wellbeing walk/exercise with your family. Work can be completed at a later time.

With no set work 'times' or 'timetable', families sharing one device are not going to be disadvantaged, compared to if lessons were set at certain times in the day (especially if that is a time when a parent/carer needs access to a device).

## What Amount of Work Should My Child Complete?

### In accord with Department guidelines:

- **Kindergarten to Year 2** students will be supported to engage with **2 hours and 30 minutes** of learning tasks;
- **Year 3 to 6** students will engage **in 3 hours** of learning tasks;
- Learning tasks will be *differentiated* for students in Support Classes;
- Additional task options, and wellbeing tasks, will be provided on our Facebook and School Stream platforms, for consideration.

If you find that your child does not complete all of their work in the set 3 hours (or 2.5 hours) do not worry! Children don't always complete all of their work at school either. They can always catch up on tasks on a later date if they finish early.

If you find that your child cannot complete their work on most days, please let their teacher know. *Learning from Home* is different than learning onsite, so we may need to modify things more as the weeks go on, to support your child and family. In the meantime, you may wish to support your child in engaging with only one of their mathematics and one of their literacy tasks as a start.



## What Will My Child's Day Look Like?

### Kindergarten and Year 1:

- **This week:** Teachers will use the Week 8 *Learning from Home* pack sent to all children last week. They will support you and your child to engage with Google Classrooms throughout the week.
- **Next Week:** Next week will look a little different, but we will be supporting families to get ready for the minor changes, with some introductory Google Classroom sessions this week.

From next week:

- **Literacy:** 45 minutes of set English/literacy tasks, with up to 25 minutes of technology tasks only.

Online tasks may include teachers explaining an activity via Google Classrooms, in a short video. They may also include your child accessing set digital readers. Teachers will also start introducing *Initialit* lessons, as part of our usual literacy program.

There will also be one more task for your child to complete (they may have two to choose from), that they will be able to complete without using technology.

- **Numeracy:** 45 minutes of set Mathematics/numeracy tasks. With up to 25 minutes of technology tasks only. This may include some set online 'Maths seeds' activities.

There will also be one more task for your child to complete (they may have two to choose from), that they will be able to complete without using technology.

- **Other Tasks:** Other tasks will be set, in align with the outcomes and Term 3 and/or 4 unit of work for: Conceptual Learning (Mondays and Tuesdays), Creative Arts (Thursdays) and Personal Development (Fridays).

- **Google Classrooms:** Comments will be monitored and responded to between 9am and 2pm each day. Outside of these times, the comment function will be turned off. Students should only comment and communicate with their teacher/s and peers during this time.

Whilst introducing technology, we have ensured that there will only be 1 hour a day of technology related tasks set. NSW Health recommends that screen time should be limited to a maximum of 2 hours per day for children (with screen time including video console game time, using computers, watching TV, using smart phones etc – see the NSW Health **Children and Screen Time Fact Sheet** on our website/School Stream).

To continue to focus on wellbeing and screen time balance, we will not be introducing Zoom lessons at this time. Should Learning from Home take part for an extended time, as in months, this may be considered – but only for short interaction times, not for multiple daily lessons.

Parents/caregivers may support their child in interacting with their peers via social media, separate to their school work, should they have the contact details of their child's friends' parents/caregivers and should this meet their child's needs. Please support safe social media practices.

- **Wellbeing Wednesday:** Each Wednesday, Google Classrooms will not have a comment feature available, however, a range of videos and educational resources will be shared by our specialist staff for your child to engage with. These will include instructional videos and ideas for wellbeing tasks your child can complete. Tasks will include:



- **PE with Mr Moses:** Students (and families) can engage in fitness fun!
- **Sport with Mr Jackson:** Students can work on their ball and game skills in and around the home.
- **Musical Fun with Ms George:** Students will have access to the school musical songs and some dance videos. PLEASE support your child to learn their songs and sing at home (as when we return to school we may not be able to sing indoors for a while again!).
- **Library with Mrs Feneck:** Students will learn about Book Week, prepare for a virtual Book Week Parade and have more fun with books and literacy.
- **Japanese with Mrs Fowler:** Japanese language tasks will be introduced, to support each child's ongoing learning in this area.
- **Creative Arts with Mrs Charlton:** Drama, dance, visual arts and other creative and wellbeing opportunities will soon be introduced.

## Year 2:

- **This week:** Year 2 teachers will also use the Week 8 *Learning from Home* pack sent to all children last week. They will also support you and your child to engage with Google Classrooms throughout the week.
- **Next Week:** Next week will look a little different, but we will be supporting families to get ready for the minor changes, with some introductory Google Classroom sessions this week.

### *From next week:*

- **Literacy:** 45 minutes of set English/literacy tasks, with up to 25 minutes of technology tasks only.  
  
Online tasks may include teachers explaining an activity via Google Classrooms, in a short video. They may also include your child accessing set digital readers. Teachers will also start introducing *Initialit* lessons, as part of our usual literacy program.  
  
There will also be one more task for your child to complete (they may have two to choose from), that they will be able to complete without using technology.
- **Numeracy:** 45 minutes of set Mathematics/numeracy tasks. With up to 25 minutes of technology tasks only. This may include some set online 'Mathletics' activities.  
  
There will also be one more task for your child to complete (they may have two to choose from), that they will be able to complete without using technology.
- **Other Tasks:** Other tasks will be set, in align with the outcomes and Term 3 or 4 unit of work for Conceptual Learning (Mondays and Tuesdays), Creative Arts (Thursdays) and Personal Development (Fridays).
- **Google Classrooms:** Comments will be monitored and responded to between 9am and 2pm each day. Outside of these times, the comment function will be turned off. Students should only comment and communicate with their teacher/s and peers during this time.



Whilst introducing technology, we have ensured that there will only be 1 hour a day of technology related tasks set. NSW Health recommends that screen time should be limited to a maximum of 2 hours per day for children (with screen time including video console game time, using computers, watching TV, using smart phones etc – see *the NSW Health **Children and Screen Time Fact Sheet** on our website*).

To continue to focus on wellbeing and screen time balance, we will not be introducing Zoom lessons at this time. Should Learning from Home take part for an extended time, as in months, this may be considered – but only for short interaction times, not for multiple daily lessons.

Parents/caregivers may support their child in interacting with their peers via social media, separate to their school work, should they have the contact details of their child's friends' parents/caregivers and should this meet their child's needs. Please support safe social media practices.

- **Wellbeing Wednesday:** Each Wednesday, Google Classrooms will not have a comment feature available, however, a range of videos and educational resources will be shared by our specialist staff for your child to engage with. These activities will be varied and will include a range of activities, as outlined in the above section for Year 1 and Kindergarten students.

## Years 3 to 6:

- **This week:** Teachers will use the Week 8 *Learning from Home* pack sent to all children last week. They will support you and your child to engage with Google Classrooms throughout the week. Students should be logging into Google Classrooms each day.
- **Next Week:** Next week will look a little different, but we will be supporting families to get ready for the minor changes with some introductory Google Classroom sessions this week. It is expected that Year 3 to 6 students attend their Google classroom each day (unless completing only paper-based tasks as arranged with your child's class teacher).

From next week:

- **Literacy:** 60 minutes of set English/literacy tasks, with up to 30 minutes of technology tasks only.  
Online tasks may include teachers explaining an activity via Google Classrooms, in a short video. They may also include your child accessing the Soundwaves spelling program online.  
There will also be one more task for your child to complete (they may have two to choose from), that they will be able to complete without using technology.
- **Numeracy:** 60 minutes of set Mathematics/numeracy tasks. With up to 30 minutes of technology tasks only. This may include some set online 'Mathletics' activities.  
There will also be one more task for your child to complete (they may have two to choose from), that they will be able to complete without using technology.
- **Other Tasks:** Other tasks will be set, in align with the outcomes and Term 3 or 4 unit of work for Conceptual Learning (Mondays and Tuesdays), Creative Arts (Thursdays) and Personal Development (Fridays).
- **Google Classrooms:** Comments will be monitored and responded to between 9am and 2pm each day. Outside of these times, the comment function will be turned off. Students should only comment and communicate with their teacher/s and peers during this time.



Whilst introducing technology, we have ensured that there will only be 1 hour a day of technology related tasks set. As shared previously, NSW Health recommends that screen time should be limited to a maximum of 2 hours per day for children (with screen time including video console game time, using computers, watching TV, using smart phones etc – see *the NSW Health **Children and Screen Time Fact Sheet** on our website*).

To continue to focus on wellbeing and screen time balance, we will not be introducing Zoom lessons at this time. Should Learning from Home take part for an extended time, as in months, this may be considered – but only for short interaction times, not for multiple daily lessons.

Parents/caregivers may support their child in interacting with their peers via social media, separate to their school work, should they have the contact details of their child's friends' parents/caregivers and should this meet their child's needs. Please support safe social media practices.

- **Wellbeing Wednesday:** Each Wednesday, Google Classrooms will not have a comment feature available, however, a range of videos and educational resources will be shared by our specialist staff as previously mentioned.

## Support Classes:

Students in Support/Family Classes will have individualised work packs and lessons made for them, based on their Individual Education Plan. Classroom teachers will share more information about the individual programs, directly, with parents and caregivers.

These tasks may include work set as per the above grade each child is in, and may include alternative differentiated activities based on a child's individual support needs.

## Will There Still Be Work Packs?

*Work packs will be distributed in the following ways:*

- **K-2 students:** K-2 will still have a work pack posted home each week. Next week's work pack is already in the mail!
- **Stage 2 students:** Years 3 and 4 students will access their work online, completing some tasks online whilst printing some task sheets for completion, or completing some tasks on paper.

Families who require printed packs have been informed that they can collect these packs from the school. Packs can be picked up from the school **between 9.30am and 2pm each Thursday and Friday (weather permitting)**. Your child's name will be on their pack, in a box labelled for their year level.

Should the weather be inclement, packs will remain in the office. Stage 2 parents will need to buzz at the gate, for their child's pack to be brought out to the collection table (in a plastic bag). Please reuse the plastic bag.

- **Stage 3 students:** Years 5 and 6 students will access their work online, completing some tasks online whilst printing some task sheets for completion, or completing some tasks on paper.

Families who require printed packs have been informed that they can collect these packs from the school.



Packs can be picked up from the school **between 9.30am and 2pm each Thursday and Friday (weather permitting)**. Your child's name will be on their pack, in a box labelled for their year level.

Should the weather be inclement, packs will remain in the office. Stage 3 parents will need to buzz at the gate, for their child's pack to be brought out to the collection table (in a plastic bag). Please reuse the plastic bag.

***If coming to the school to collect work, please remain in your car until there is nobody else at the entrance gate/collection table. Please use the sanitiser provided before going through the work packs to find your child's one. Please also use the sanitiser provided before pressing intercom buttons and using pens.***

### **Onsite Learning During Learning From Home:**

Thank you to all families for supporting your child to learn at home where possible. We continue to have minimal staff onsite to supervise children who cannot be supported at home, as the child does not have a parent/caregiver working from home or present at home.

Students learning onsite have continued to be small in number, with around 9-20 students attending each day. K-2 students are working in the Year 3 rooms and Year 3 to 6 students are working from the library each day from this week. These two cohorts have separate break times. Bubblers remain closed and safety and strict hygiene practices remain in place to support the safety of everyone on site, the families of our staff and students, and our community.

### **What Will Change If School Resumes Onsite Learning?**

As soon as we are aware of a return to onsite learning, we will share any related information with parents/caregivers, prior to onsite learning taking place for all students.

*Changes may include:* separate lunchtimes for students in different grades, non-essential visitors not being permitted onsite, variations to previously planned events (ie graduations, excursions, assemblies, sport, SRE/Scripture etc). We will let you know as soon as we are made aware of any change in this regard.

Information for parents and caregivers can always be found on the Department's 'Advice for Families' web site.

***Thank you once again*** for your ongoing support of our school and of each other. Our staff and families are doing a fantastic job of *Learning From Home* and we know that these great efforts will continue! Let's continue to focus on the wellbeing of each and every member of our school community, especially our children/students. Stay safe!

Regards,  
Michelle Hulme  
Principal