

MARCH. 2020

GETTING THROUGH COVID-19 TOGETHER



Some advice from the Guidance Department

Dear Parents and Learners

"IT IS TRUE THAT WE ARE FACING A GRAVE EMERGENCY. BUT IF WE ACT TOGETHER, IF WE ACT NOW, AND IF WE ACT DECISIVELY, WE WILL OVERCOME IT."

- PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA

In light of the current situation relating to COVID-19, it is only natural to experience a wide variety of thoughts, feelings and reactions. At the onset of a crisis, anxiety levels can be high due to uncertainty about the future - this is a normal reaction. Part of this uncertainty relates to the current academic year of our learners. While this may cause concern and worry for our school community, it is important to remember that we are all in this together.

We have compiled some tips to help you navigate this challenging time, particularly now that we are suddenly faced with a 3 week holiday, for which no-one is prepared.

Safe Online Interaction

While it is important to stay connected and stay informed, too much information can be overwhelming and increase stress levels. We recommend the following:

- Check reliable news sources such as provincial or national government websites/WHO
- Join the Dept of Health COVID-19 support service via WhatsApp - 0600 123456
- Set limits on social media
- Avoid going online right before sleeping as this could lead to difficulty in falling asleep
- Be careful of spreading fake news

Tips for reducing anxiety in your home

A note for parents

Adolescents are in a phase of great change, both physically and emotionally, which can be confusing and anxiety-provoking. Adding a global challenge can escalate existing emotional turmoil. As the adolescent pre-frontal cortex is still developing, their ability to apply logic and reasoning is not yet fully refined. They may need our assistance to think rationally in order to bring reassurance, and reduce emotional and reactive behaviour.

- Model the behaviour and attitude you want your child to embrace: if you are in panic mode, it sends a message to your child that they should also be in panic mode
- Provide opportunities for open communication and encourage your child to voice any fears they may have: if they know you as parent can “hold” what they communicate, they will feel more encouraged to share their doubts or fears

As social distancing is being recommended, this is the ideal time to strengthen family bonds.

Why not...

- Eat dinner together as a family and encourage conversation
- Watch a movie together instead of on individual devices
- Play board games together
- Teach your children skills you don't ordinarily have time to teach them i.e. how to bake/cook, change a plug etc.

A note for learners

While some of you may be ecstatic about the extended holiday period, others may find themselves questioning:

- Will I get the virus?
- Will I be able to see my friends?
- Will I finish my academic year?
- Will I be able to see my girlfriend/boyfriend?
- Will there be a matric dance?

Remember that everyone reacts to stressful situations in different ways. Your thoughts and feelings are valid and it is important that you communicate them instead of bottling them up. Expressing yourself to others will help you realize that this is a shared reality and that you are not going through this alone.

- Get regular exercise
- Maintain a healthy diet
- Stay hydrated
- Get enough sleep
- Do activities that help you relax, such as walking the dog, reading, listening to music, journaling, etc.
- Be supportive towards others. Shift your mindset from protecting yourself to protecting others.

"The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members"

- Coretta Scott King