



Remote Learning

Juggling Life

Four weeks into remote learning, and every one of us – students, parents and staff are continuing to learn and adapt to the situation. I am talking to an increasing number of families, and hear lots of different comments – most commonly expressing how much they miss school and sharing the ‘juggling of life’ challenge.

One thing is for certain, nobody has said ‘this is easy’. I believe that the last four weeks have been a great community effort, where everyone has played their part. Despite the challenges, parents have told me how they have enjoyed finding out about what and how their child is learning, and have enjoyed the opportunity to actively support them during ‘class time’.

In this week’s wrap-up, as well as providing further tips from teachers, I have included three FPS teachers’ experiences as parents of young primary school students at different schools. I think that it is valuable to hear about the experiences of others, particularly at a time when we are so physically removed from each other.

Wishing you a safe, relaxing and enjoyable weekend.

~ Paul Wallace, Principal



Tessellations – by Ginger G, 6B

Fridays – ‘Catch Up or Rest Up’ Day

Today we had our first Friday as a ‘Catch Up or Rest Up’ day. The purpose of implementing this day was to give everyone some breathing space. The school will continue with this model every Friday.

Why have a ‘Catch Up or Rest Up’ Day?

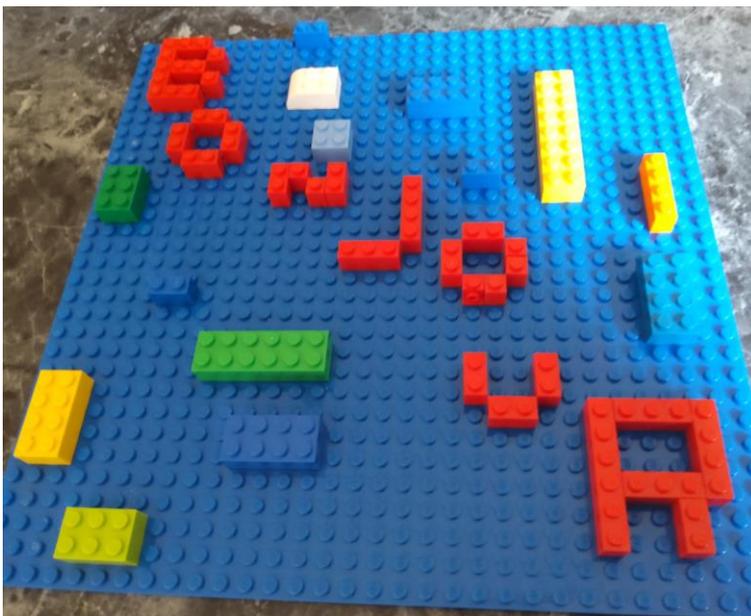
Teachers are uploading a lot of content to Google Classroom – this is so that students have the same learning opportunities that they would at school. However, we know that learning at home is very different to learning in a classroom, and that it requires families to commit a lot of time and energy to support this. By having a ‘Catch Up or Rest Up’ day, families have the opportunity to take a breather, and decide how they want to spend their time on Fridays.

What do students do on a ‘Catch Up or Rest Up’ Day?

This is up to you. As mentioned above, there is plenty of work available and whatever the students can do is great. We are not asking them to complete every piece of work, as we know this is a challenge. However, we do want to provide them with the option of completing tasks in all learning areas throughout this indefinite period. Fridays gives time for students to attend to tasks that they might not get around to completing; this could include specialist tasks or wellbeing work. Alternatively, your children can spend the day offline.

What will Teachers be doing on a ‘Catch Up or Rest Up’ Day?

Teachers will be online, uploading daily videos and organising scheduled video meetings as well as finalising the learning and teaching for the coming week.



Bonjour, a French lesson – by Will J, Year 1/2C



Wellbeing, in the Blue Zone – Eveline L, FD

Working, Parenting & Remote Learning—Staff Reflections

Remote Learning is Not Easy for Anyone

Remote learning is not easy for anyone. I assumed as an experienced educator that I would have no trouble navigating this new way of learning for my own children – how naïve was I! I have three children, two are school aged. Fortunately their school uses Google Classroom, so I only had to learn one online platform – some teacher friends I know are working with one platform at school and another with their own children!

At work I have never had trouble working with multiple children in a school environment. At home with my two children it is an entirely different story! Trying to keep them both engaged and on task while working myself seems impossible most days. Early on, I realised I was just not going to be able to get through all the work uploaded each day and that it was okay not to complete everything. As a family we had to decide on our priorities, and although academics are extremely important, we knew that ours and our children's mental health and wellbeing were at the top of the list. To maintain our family's wellbeing we needed to cut down on the tasks that we expect our children to complete each day. For one of my children our expectation is for him to complete two tasks a day – his teachers are very accommodating and understanding, this has helped us relax about not getting everything done.

We try to look at the list of tasks uploaded each day and choose the areas we know our children need the most support with. If they are pretty confident with one area of the curriculum we will not necessarily do that task. We write a list of the tasks they need to complete and they tick them off as they complete them during the day. Our days include completing the learning tasks from school as well as playing games together, going for walks, playing in the yard (and of course some PS4!). If they get all of their tasks done they get more time on the PS4 in the afternoon.

Remote learning is not easy for anyone. I know this from experience, I know this from talking with my friends and family who are also parents, and I know this from hearing stories from the parents at FPS. It is hard trying to juggle work, family, schooling and all the other things that you will have on your plate. All you can do is your best and please know that everyone at FPS is aware of how difficult it is for you as parents. We understand that some days are tougher than others, and some days it is impossible to get anything done. That is ok. We all know that academics are vital, but so is maintaining a positive home environment. If that means something needs to give, please cut yourself some slack and ease off the learning tasks – for the sake of you and your family's mental health and wellbeing in this very difficult time.

We are all looking forward to things going back to normal but in the meantime please know that we all have the best interests of your children at heart so if there is anything we can do to support you please reach out.



~ Sarah Abbott, Assistant Principal & Mother of Three

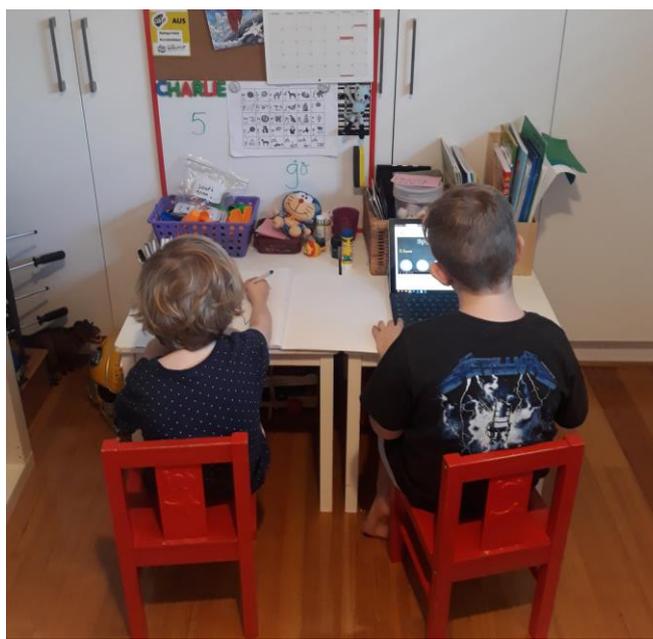
Every Day Presents its Own Challenges

I have two boys – Charlie in Foundation and Oliver in Grade 3. Trying to keep all the balls in the air at the moment feels more challenging than ever before, even though there’s no rushing out the door to get to school and work on time, no bags to pack or lunch boxes to fill. Every day presents its own challenges and is dependent on everyone in the family doing their bit.

My work space moves all around the house based on what is going on at that time. I might be at the kitchen bench or in the dining room or the kids’ playroom (now classroom), just trying to find a space where I can think or have a video conference. We have finally realised that there are days where it’s just not going to happen; whether ‘it’ means the huge pile of washing (how is there still so much washing?), the email I’m supposed to respond to, or the inquiry project on one of Australia’s Prime Ministers that was meant to be handed in several days ago.

There have also been lovely moments when my boys are both searching the garden for an animal home, or watching my eldest help his little brother write the word ‘go’. It has also been lovely to have a little more insight into what they are actually learning at school. It’s a vast improvement on the usual one word response I would receive when I used to ask how their day had been.

It’s been a challenging time for everyone in a variety of ways, but I feel very lucky that we are all safe and well. Having said that, I’m definitely looking forward to a meal out, a swim at the pool, and catching up with friends and family without technical glitches!



~ Naomi Reynolds, Year 1/2 Teacher & Mother of Two

Learning Resilience in an Way that No Camp or Program Can Ever Deliver

“Jamie here is your hot milo, you can have it when you have your one- to-one session with Mary, and Tom would like to have a virtual Lego play date with you at four.”

“The letter “T” just write that please! I know its Wednesday but we are having Taco Tuesday on Wednesday today, sorry.”

Term 2 Week 3 was hard, my partner was unwell and my two children, one school aged, just did not get along. In between acting as a mediator for my boys and worrying about my partner's test results, I scraped through the bare minimum for my Foundation class remote learning, and did three activities from the plethora of learning items created by the dedicated teachers of my boy. In a way, looking at my students' uploads over a cuppa with the dogs close by was a welcome change. It was nice to see students enjoying the activities and commenting on how silly I looked while trying to balance on one leg. The best bit was watching my Year 1/2 students sing "What a Wonderful World", many with priceless and earnest expressions. I work part-time and am lucky that my partner is able to work from home, however I do feel the stress of having to be my child's personal assistant and everyone else's FAQ page.

I hence cannot begin to comprehend what some of you parents and carers are going through. Some of you are parenting alone. Some of you are at the frontline facing untold horrors. Some of you have vulnerable family members or conditions you worry about. Some of you have jobs where decisions and calculations have to be made with attention to detail, yet your children are also demanding that same attention. Some of you have lost your jobs or are thinking how long you can keep your business afloat. Some of you have family overseas, and you wonder when you will see them again. Or maybe your parents live just a stone throw away, and you also wonder when you can give them a cuddle again. Some of you are parents of only children and you worry because your child has not had much interaction with other children. Some of you have children with difficulties learning who might not be as motivated during this time.

The list goes on. The common denominator is anxiety and uncertainty. These are the stories and stresses emerging about remote learning and working at home. Yet one thing is certain, our children are safe at home. Our children are learning so much from how we handle this situation and building strong relationships with members of our household. They are learning resilience in a way no camp or program can ever deliver.

Here is some homework for you (yes, this is a little cheeky and cruel). Think about what your child has learnt during this time which does not involve schoolwork and celebrate that. For example, I am proud to say that my boys have learnt to pay a compliment to the person cooking their meal and scrape their plates afterwards. Imagine that, when we can have dinner parties again, everyone will think they have excellent manners. Hang in there and enjoy your beautiful children.



~ Olivia Li, Performing Arts Teacher and Mother of Two

Teacher Tips for Remote Learning

Following on from last week, below are further tips and advice from our teachers to support your child (and you!) with remote learning.

**Brendan
Foundation**

Remember that in any school day, throughout the year levels, there will be lots of discussion (about school work but also about the day, things that happen at home, funny stories, etc.) There are times when teachers read stories, kids build and play and discuss and have fun. Kids also spend time waiting – for their peers to be ready, for their teacher to finish working with a small group, for the last person to find their maths book – so they can wait for you too.

**Serena
Year 1/2**

Make sure to include lots of breaks throughout the day, just like we would at school. After completing an activity, give your child time to run around for 5 – 10 minutes, watch a silly brain break video like [GoNoodle](#), or have some playtime.

If something isn't working, stop and take a break from the activity. These breaks are important as your child is more likely to take in the learning when they are feeling fresh and focused, than when they are feeling tired and distracted.

**Faye
Year 1/2**

Keep up the good work and don't put too much pressure on yourself!

**Jayde
Year 3**

Ensure that families are being kind to themselves, and that happiness and well-being should always be priority, even if that means missing activities.

Perhaps, families could consider having a few hours a day, or once a week, where it is device-free, including TV, phones, etc. Just to ensure you are staying connected and having reprieve from screens.



Canoe building – Joshua F, 3A

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| Elise Year 4 | You are all doing an amazing job supporting your child with remote learning whilst juggling the demands of daily life. Remember while you are nurturing your child, to take time to nurture yourself, even in a small way. |
| Michele Year 5 | If an online task has a link to an activity that is not working, no need to worry. You can either let the activity go, or do a quick Google/You Tube search for something comparable. |
| Monique Year 6 | Each evening discuss a highlight of the day and a challenge of the day. Ask each other how the challenge was overcome. |
| Rebecca Literacy Support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A general daily routine may help children feel secure. • Encourage and celebrate persistence and effort in learning activities rather than correct answers or spelling. • Please remember we move around from one activity to the next at school, so movement in the home could help iron out the wriggles. • Short bursts of learning will be more beneficial than simply trying to get everything done. • Read to your children to demonstrate fluency, expression, and a love of reading • Humour may be the best medicine for isolation. |
| Keri Performing Arts | <p>Make a family playlist for dance/work breaks. Use some props (sunglasses, tea towels, soft toys, etc.) and make it as silly as you can.</p> <p>Spotify Kids, Kinderling Radio and ABC Kids Listen all have great ideas and playlists (as well as excellent podcasts and audiobooks).</p> |

A Virtual Curriculum

During a normal day, I would visit most classrooms and discover what the students are learning across each area of the school. In our current climate this is not possible, however I am fortunate to be able to browse through the online classrooms created by our teachers. It has been so lovely to see the daily videos, read the positive, warm and supportive interactions between teachers, students and parents, and also to see some of the work that is being submitted in all areas of the curriculum. I thought I would give you a little overview of what is happening across our (virtual) school at the moment.

Literacy

Foundation students are writing a *Gratitude Journal* and creating their own personal *Word Walls*. Some students are focussing on persuasive texts, looking at the setting in detail, and using online programs such as *Epic* and *Reading Eggs*.

Numeracy

Many year levels are working on subtraction. Some students are using natural items such as leaves to create groups to use in number sentences. Others are working on using strategies such as 'jump and hop' to solve subtraction equations. *Essential Maths* has been used by some areas to assess students as they would do in class before and after a topic is covered, to assess progress.

Physical Education

Underarm throwing has been a focus for many of our younger students over the past week. Geoff has uploaded videos of him doing the skill and has asked students to send a video of them doing the skill also.

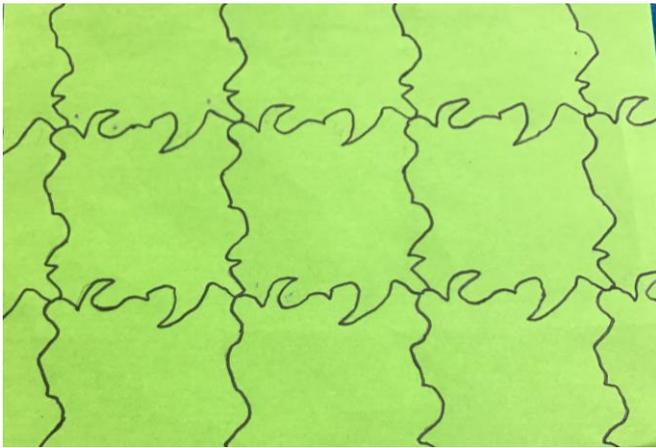
French

Some of the tasks assigned in the past week have been creating a 'bonjour' poster, learning the body parts in French and learning and performing the French alphabet rap!



Visual Art

The artist that students are learning about this term is M.C Escher. Students have been experimenting with lines (spiral, straight, zig zag) and tessellations.



Performing Arts

The older students have been working on their class dances. Other students have been working on rhythm patterns, creating a hopscotch game incorporating rhythm patterns.



Wellbeing

While there have been a variety of items added to this area, some popular ones have been creating a lava lamp, dance and yoga videos and mindfulness activities from *Smiling Mind*.

I believe the most popular thing from the past week has been the whole class meetings. I know the teachers have missed their students immensely. This was evident at our staff meeting at the end of last week – they spoke about their virtual meetings with beaming faces! It was also wonderful to see the comments on the classroom streams before and after the meetings, it shows how important it is for our students to maintain that feeling of connection to each other, the staff and the school.

~ Sarah Abbott, Assistant Principal

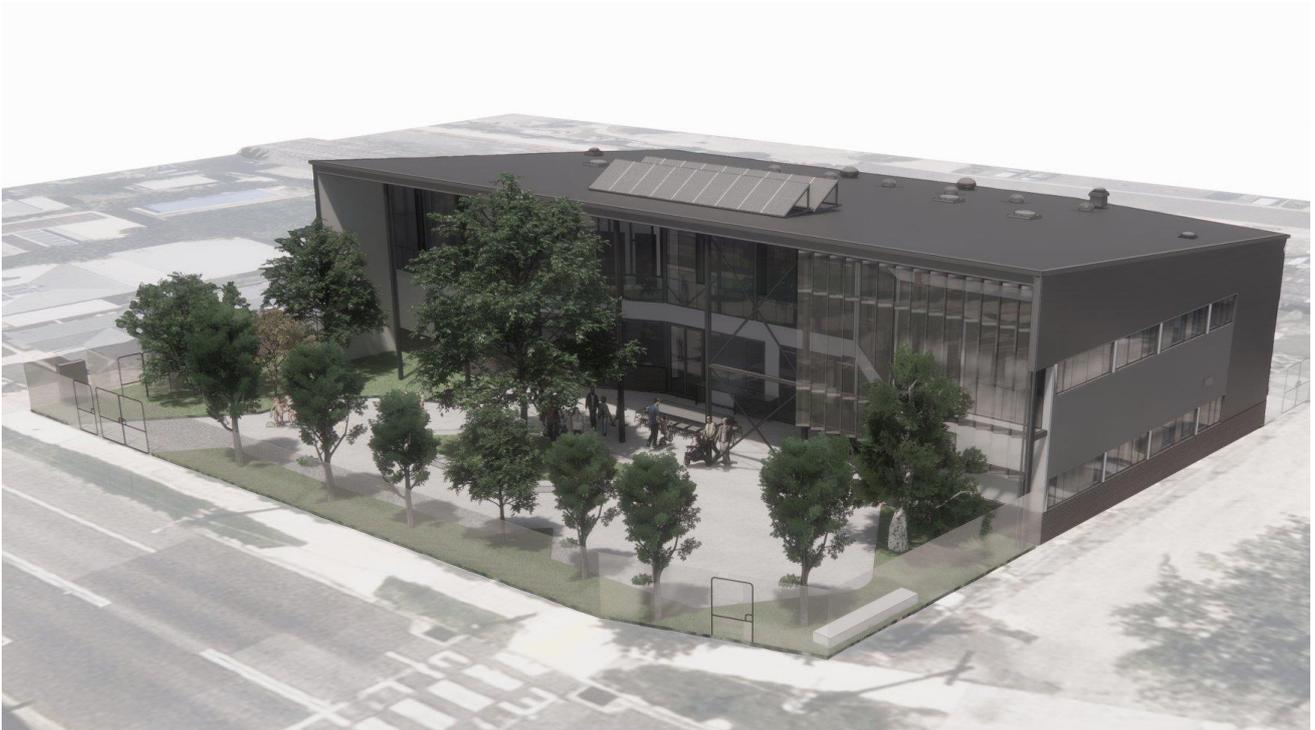
Wingrove Street Development

Building Works

The commencement of works on our second campus, Wingrove St, was announced by our local member Kat Theophanous, and by James Merlino on Wednesday – see the [press release](#).

Many of you were probably aware that this work had started based on the diggers digging and construction workers working, and now I can officially inform the community. I look forward to being able to share with you images and details of this project once I am given the green light by the Minister's Office.

In the meantime, it is great to have such a positive distraction from COVID-19 to celebrate.



Artist impression of the new building

~ Paul Wallace, Principal