Dear Parent/Guardian

We hope this email finds you well. These are indeed unprecedented and difficult times and we appreciate that each family is dealing with the new challenges of distance learning. We have spent some time preparing guidelines and resources which may benefit you and your child at this time. Please use these at your discretion and apply only what you feel may suit you and your child. It is not prescriptive and so can be used as you see fit.

Observations and suggestions by some post primary Special Education Teachers

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Regarding whom? | Concerns | Possible Solutions |
| Students | Amount and pacing of work need a cohesive plan- students seem to be getting overwhelmed trying to manage their time | As we have hour long classes it seems reasonable to divide that hour in to manageable pieces. |
| Students | Some students are working all the way through the day because there is nothing in place to say we start now- finish now- break now | It may be a good idea to say no contact before 8.45am or after 3.30pm- may be worthwhile considering a shortened school day for non-exam years (or even exam years) in an effort to aid mental health |
| Students | The news re oral exams and practical exams has caused more anxiety for certain students. They are worried that the work they have done will be lost- a waste of effort. | Clear communication from State Exam Commission helped alleviate this we hope.  All students will now be given full marks – 100% for the Oral and Practical components of their exam. |
| Students | Not all students will be able to complete work unsupported causing great anxiety | Guide homework and amount that can realistically be done in one sitting. |
| Students | Social and emotional support is particularly needed for SEN Students | Keep information factual and appropriate to age group. Try to form a new order to the day to support a regular routine. Make getting outdoors part of the daily plan. |
| Parents | Parents of children with AEN may find it more difficult to manage the changes as their child may find it harder to work independently, understand the changes. | Email is still available and any support I can give I will happily do so.  [O.Keane@shstullamore.ie](mailto:O.Keane@shstullamore.ie).  [P.Moore@shstullamore.ie](mailto:P.Moore@shstullamore.ie) |
| Students with assistive technology |  | Perfect time to improve typing skills- little and often.  Typing.com is a useful one. |
| Students | Access to devices and shared devices- where there are a number of children in a household they may have access for a short part of the day. | Students should consider if gaming consoles could be used to access work, smart tv, phones, kindles, etc. We advise that in a home where there are a number of students, the Leaving Cert or Junior Cert student has priority for technology and wifi.  Old slow laptops can be repurposed into faster chrome books; see link for details  <https://www.alphr.com/google/1003319/how-to-turn-your-old-laptop-into-a-chromebook-turn-your-sluggish-old-windows-laptop> |
| Parents | Parents may not want or be able to support their child academically. They are however, best placed to identify the needs of their child. | If there is something in place, they may take it up later if not immediately.  Use your discretion at this time. |
| School timetable | Reports are that following the typical timetable too rigidly is not always realistic or necessary | Students can manage a timetable appropriate to their age, ability and range of needs. Again, at this point this is at the discretion of their parent/guardian. |

* **Supporting Individuals with Autism through Uncertain Times**

Great resource with lots of useful information:

<file:///C:/Users/User/AppData/Local/Packages/Microsoft.MicrosoftEdge_8wekyb3d8bbwe/TempState/Downloads/Supporting%20Individuals%20with%20Autism%20through%20Uncertian%20Times%20Full%20Packet%20(1).pdf>

* **Autism and the Corona Virus – 20 Tips**

Useful and relevant points

<https://petervermeulenblog.wordpress.com/2020/03/16/autism-and-the-corona-virus-20-tips/>

* **Supporting Individuals with Exceptional ability**

Great resource with lots of useful information:

<file:///C:/Users/User/AppData/Local/Packages/Microsoft.MicrosoftEdge_8wekyb3d8bbwe/TempState/Downloads/Best%20Practices%20for%20Educating%20Online%20by%20eLuma%20(1).pdf>

* **Home Learning Resources List for Schools and Families**

Substantial list of resources with something for everyone. As this is a British website it is necessary to use your discretion and adapt/ignore some information not relevant to Ireland:

<https://chatterpack.net/blogs/blog/resources-list-for-home-learning>

* **READ ALOUD**

A reminder of how to use Immersive Reader on the device. This will allow information to be read aloud to the student.



* **English as Foreign Language resources online**

<file:///C:/Users/User/OneDrive%20-%20SHS%20Tullamore/EAL%20online%20resources.pdf>

* **Education Companies offering free subscriptions in school closure time**

<http://www.amazingeducationalresources.com/>

* NCSE National Council for Special Education

Online resource for parents.

<https://ncse.ie/online-resources>

With every best wish,

Additional Educational Needs Department,

Sacred Heart School,

Tullamore.