

A Parent Guide to Transitioning between Covid-19 Alert Levels and Reintegrating into School

The Post Lockdown Routine

After the initial flurry and excitement of first road trips, the newly qualified driver soon learns that their newfound freedom isn't all it's cracked up to be. First there is car insurance, then ongoing petrol costs. On top of that, there is the obligation to younger siblings and maintenance. That's not to mention the monotony of morning traffic, waiting endlessly at lights, and detours that seem to go in all directions.

The same can be said of the post-lockdown routine. Irrespective of whether returning to school was greeted with acclaim or trepidation, several school routines have now fully resumed, and the dust is starting to settle. A sense of 'normality' is returning, and this may bring to the fore the need to address things with your children that you have had to let slide. Equally, there may now be an opportunity as a family to celebrate how you coped and the strengths you observed. Where there are challenges or tensions, we encourage you to have calm, respectful conversations and offer the following suggestions.

Externalise Problems: For example - "I'm not the problem, and you're not the problem, but there is a problem." By naming and externalising the problem, all parties can look at the problem and work objectively as to how to manage it. Externalising problems helps avoid falling into blaming or shaming patterns of communication which creates emotional wounding

Whatever you Feed GROWS! I heard a story of a passenger on the ferry early one morning who looked out the window where she was sitting, and she could see nothing but darkness. Then, as she glanced across the other side of the ferry, she was surprised to see the most magnificent orange sunrise. It's a reminder that "it makes a difference which window you look out of." As she looked around the ferry, she noticed that nearly all the passengers were missing this spectacular sunrise because they were either asleep or plugged into devices. Again, a reminder "it makes a difference what you plug into." It's the same in life and through seasons like this, we can choose which window we look out of and we can choose what we plug into. Take time to feed your mind and communicate with your children, things which are **hopeful, positive and helpful.**

You might find your child experiencing elevated levels of stress and/or anxiety. **This is normal** when we perceive threat or are navigating change. Encourage them to find safe ways of expressing their feelings and to think of ways to feed the calm – i.e. take a walk, practice deep abdominal breathing, listen to music, prayer and Christian meditation. Remind your child of KWS counselling support, which they can access when at school, to chat through their experience.

Students will be encouraged to set new learning intentions. Consider how you can support them in setting clear and attainable academic and/or well-being goals, and praise them as you observe them taking small action steps toward their goals. **Remember, initially the goal is not to get from A-Z but from A-B.** Remember to praise the process and not just the outcome.

The first few months on the road for a new driver are full of exciting new adventures and monotonous daily commutes, traffic jams and open highways, as well as a dip in the bank balance and the odd near miss. So too is life in a post-lockdown routine. There will be times filled with hope and possibility, and times when challenging conversations need

to be had. There will be stress, but equally wins that come with clear and attainable targets. Remember, as you navigate this season, **work together**, **listen and validate feelings** and **show courage** as we own what we can control.