

How can Parents Help their Teen be more Successful Online.

Stephanie Hatten- High School Counsellor at BBS, Kuwait. Spring 2020- CoronaVirus Times

As the Coronavirus pandemic continues to change our lives, most private schools across Kuwait and around the world have embraced online learning to meet the educational needs of our Children. This is an exceptional opportunity to keep up with our studies and not fall behind.

Ultimately, the responsibility to be engaged and successful online falls on your Teen, that's true, BUT your Teen really can benefit from your encouragement and support to make the ONLINE learning successful. Parents can help most by providing expectations, structure and routine, in a positive home environment. Parents are not alone, the BBS Teachers and High School Counsellors- Thomas and Stephanie are all here to make this a smooth and positive last semester.

Here is advice for navigating this new frontier of online education with your children.

Here are a few tips:

1. Creating a Schedule is Key

If you and your children are all doing work from your home, it's likely that this is the first time that has ever happened. A schedule is extremely important. Make sure you are familiar with BBS's current online scheduling times and that of your teen. Try not to let your child make their own schedule and miss out on instruction. There isn't a lot of time before our school year ends and working on time and putting in the work will prepare your child for the next grade. Have a clear vision of what is expected of your child posted close to his or her learning desk. This will reinforce the idea that school is still "OPEN online." With their *school counsellors* or yourself, your child can learn to prioritize and learn to create goals, tasks, and deadlines, just like adults do when they go to work.

2. Don't let your children treat this as a vacation

This time at home might feel like an extended vacation for your child, but it's important to remind them that IT'S NOT! and that their education still comes first. Obligations like getting up for school in the morning, being on time and organised, doing their best, reaching out for help from their teachers or counsellors are still important skills and habits they need to build on. And being engaged with learning online is fun and a new skill set.

3. Limit the time your teen spends on other devices during the school day.

A "digital quarantine" between 9am-3pm might be necessary to keep your child's attention focused on their online learning during the school day. They're be time for your Teen to catch up with friends and other devices later on.

4. Make space for learning

Students achieve their best work in a quiet, comfortable space that is strictly devoted to learning. This space should be a different set-up than other areas in the home, such as a quiet place in your teen's bedroom. Make sure they have a desk, comfortable chair and adequate space to set out their school materials. It is important that it is a private and quiet place where your child can focus on their teachers' online instruction. The room should be free from distractions, such as other siblings, TV and music. Also, your child should turn off electronic devices, such as cell phones, watches or other apps on the computer, such as Facebook and What's Ap.

5. Maintain breaks such as snack time and recess

Routines and schedules are extremely important for teens at school, and this is no different at-home during online learning. Children will function best if they maintain their routine as close to

normal as possible. Setting alarms similar to those they would encounter at school can be helpful. They need a break away from the computer to chill out, have a snack, chat with friends or go outside in the yard or balcony during this confined period. Reassure he or she will be able to chat with friends later, or go to the family chalet on the weekend. There is time to have fun and also stick to BBS's online schedule and pass the grade.

6. Mix screen time with old school learning mediums

Overuse of screen time can have adverse impacts on young brains, so it's important to mix it up during a time like this. It's likely that your children will want to continue to use a screen of some sort during their breaks from doing work, so it's important to limit screen time by mixing in time to study from text books or print out their work instead of reading everything online. Encourage print and books.

7. How is your child going to socialise? Allow them to interact with friends via video chats once the online learning day is over.

Your children are used to lots of social contact at school, so they will definitely feel the effects of being distanced from their friends. While it might not be safe for your kids to see their friends in person, they'll want to interact with friends they can't see in person online. Video chats are often the closest thing to seeing someone in person, and are a great way to get in social time without endangering yourself or others. If your child does not regularly video chat with their friends, your Teen or yourself can speak with their friends, or you with other parents to set up a video chat playdate. Remember if you meeting up with others, maintain social distancing and never become complacent.

8. Help your child Relax! You too!

At the end of their school day, they feel a little tense you child may want to drift off and let the world go by, take a nap, even. I'm going to share a link below for you and your child to listen to. Find a quiet comfortable place. Recall your favourite place, perhaps a beach, your favourite room in the house, a secret spot in the garden or woods you've walked through somewhere you've visited on holiday, your family chalet or farm, a river or outlook post at your favourite holiday spot... Whatever it is, you can bring that to your imagination, rest somewhere quite and listen to some tranquil music to relax your body and feel calm. Here is an example of the music I use to play in my office when we were at BBS together. Students often remarked that it helped them feel calmer.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gz-SCxj8rds>

9. Keep in touch with other parents.

During this time, parents also need to stay in touch with others via virtual communication. Each of you is going through a new experience. Check in with other parents to see what they've found effective, and ask if they need help as well.

10. Speaking of Fun! Remember to schedule family time.

This is a unique opportunity. Families haven't never been required to be together so much. SO it is a great opportunity to get to know each other better and have some fun with your children while they are at home. You can watch movies together, get to know the music your child likes to listen to and the games or other things they enjoy. Let them know about your interests, what you did as a child and your family's traditions. Share old photos and reflect on your vacation time together and what is your dream vacation after Corona; take the time to get to know your child, who his friends are, what does your teen like to do, what are his or her ambitions, play family card games, charades, or chess, or depending on your availability be outside at the chalet, pool or yard together. The adolescent years go fast and teens really love the attention and support of their parents even though you may think they are independent already. They need you and seek your

interest in them. You may not have this unique opportunity to spend so much time with your Teen, again.

Do reach out to me if you need to talk. Send me an email and we can set up a WhatsApp time.

Miss you all: Ms. Stef. High School Counselling.