

9 August 2021

Dear RJ Families

New Update (No.21/10) The importance of Wellbeing

“I heard that we are in the same boat. But it’s not like that. We are in the same storm, but not in the same boat. We are different ships looking to survive. Let everyone navigate their route with respect, empathy and responsibility.”

Who wrote these words in 2020 remains unknown, but the message is still the same. In uncertain times such as these, we need to look after each other and look after ourselves. Everyone’s needs will be different, but everyone needs to be “well” to navigate the course ahead. Consequently, some of the discussions the School Executive have been having of late is how do we care for our students and staff at this time when they are spending a whole lot of their day on screens. How can we provide opportunity for ‘wellbeing space’ in our Distance Learning Plan?

Student and Staff Wellbeing

As part of our wellbeing focus, we are introducing WWW – **Wireless Wellbeing Wednesday**, an RJ interpretation on the Worldwide Web prefix (www). The first of these will be this Wednesday 11 August followed by a second WWW on August 25. Teachers will be suggesting a range of activities that students can select to complete on this day which do not involve them being on screens. For some of our older students, this could be a catchup day of getting some study, classwork or assessments done, or helping a sibling or helping around the home, but ultimately, it’s about caring for yourself.

Family Wellbeing

At RJ we are aware that additional screen time during the DLP can impact students in a range of ways. Research suggests that these could be headaches, reduced physical activity, less down time for creativity or play and changes in sleep patterns that impact all aspects of social interaction and learning.

Oxford Learning recommends making an “Offline Time Agreement” for the household, where the family agrees to have some tech-free time everyday. The Mayo Clinic recommends that priority be given to “unplugged play” and creating “tech free zones” during meals at least one other time through the week. Additionally, they suggest that all screens should be off one hour before going to bed and that all devices be charged outside of the bedroom.

While we remain in DLP, I have included some helpful suggestions to help you look out for your children:

- Try to keep computer use to normal school hours. Plan for physical activity either before the start or after the end of the school day.
- Where possible have your child work in an interruptible or viewable space. For example, keeping the bedroom door open.
- Limit or remove access to additional Wi-Fi based devices during school time. These could be iPads, mobile phones and gaming consoles.
- Adjust the settings on your home Wi-Fi to limit access to sites that could be a distraction during school hours, such as gaming sites – most internet service providers have online help to put these settings in place.
- Help your child to have breaks during the day; plan for them to happen. Students need to be away from work for more than just going to the bathroom. Create an “offline agreement”, highlighting what non-screen time activities will be on a certain day or throughout the week.
- Share a mealtime together that is tech free. No devices at the table and no TV on in the background.



Fees

Whilst we can be encouraged that all our School camps were able to be held earlier this year and the majority of our planned excursions and incursions were able to go ahead these past two terms, we expect that such co-curricular activities will not be able to take place in Term 3 and are unlikely to be able to be rescheduled for Term 4.

As a courtesy and being mindful of the various changes to activities, **a reduction will be made in the billing amounts** for the Term 3 Service Charges. To this end, we have made the decision for a credit to be provided to families along the following lines, noting that the service charge also incorporates camp costs which are allocated across the year.

Kinder to Year 4 service charges will be credited in full:

- Kindergarten Service Charge of \$120 – reduced to 0
- Years 1-2 Service Charge of \$145 – reduced to 0
- Years 3-4 Service Charge of \$160 – reduced to 0

Years 5 to 12 service charges will be credited \$120:

- Years 5-6 Service Charge of \$235 - reduced to \$115
- Years 7-8 Service Charge of \$275 – reduced to \$155
- Years 9-10 Service Charge of \$280 – reduced to \$160
- Years 11 Service Charge of \$280 – reduced to \$160
- Year 12 Service Charge of \$290 – reduced to \$170

For families with Pre-Kindergarten students, please note that the fee structure is under review and you will be contacted in due course. Decisions regarding Term 4 service charges for K-12 families will be determined closer to the time. I can assure RJ families that one of our chief goals, shared by our School Council, Executive and staff, is to maintain student learning so that, after the pandemic, we can quickly resume our normal School community life and learning. Hopefully, this is sooner rather than later.

However, some of our families may already be experiencing financial difficulties due to the impact of the pandemic. As mentioned in my (No.21/6) letter, **if your financial circumstances have changed or do change, as a result of the pandemic and lockdowns, contact the School immediately** by phone or via email to Mrs Ghali, Operations Manager sghali@rjas.nsw.edu.au in the first instance, explaining your extenuating circumstances, so that a discussion with you can be arranged to find a possible way forward in the short term in consultation with the Principal. **Various measures of tangible assistance may be made available and will be supported by our School Council and The Anglican Schools Corporation (TASC) with a documented application process involved.**

Stay safe and stay well.

God Bless

Alan Dawson | **Principal**



Links for Parents and Students For Use of Devices

FOR PARENTS

Overview - [<Click Here>](#) for a two page introduction document for parents.

Advice - <https://www.esafety.gov.au/parents/skills-advice>

Free Webinars - <https://www.esafety.gov.au/parents/webinars>

Big Issues- <https://www.esafety.gov.au/parents/big-issues>

FOR STUDENTS

If you are concerned regarding your online safety please make a report to the eSafety Commissioner.

<https://www.esafety.gov.au/report>

HELPFUL LINKS

eSafety Commissioner (Australian Government)

<https://www.esafety.gov.au/>

Research Findings

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/childrens-health/in-depth/screen-time/art-20047952>

<https://www.oxfordlearning.com/manage-screen-time-in-the-age-of-online-learning/>