

18th March 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian

Re: Hints and tips of having teenagers in a lockdown house!!

We are humbled that some parents have asked for advice on how to manage their teenagers at home 24/7 in the event of a period of school closure. So at SLT we drew upon our experiences of teaching 1000s of teenagers over a period of 20+ years and as parents of teenagers (we have 15 children between us!) to give some hints and tips, which might give you a heads up if school closes.

- Keep routines
 - Showering, getting dressed (very important).
 - Eat breakfast. For some teenagers this maybe a new concept...maybe eat all together as a family...a bit later than normal...8.30am/9.00am...good chance for teenagers to sleep a bit more.
 - Give them a half hour warning and then a 15 minute warning up to when breakfast is ready
 - Make sure breakfast is ready for 9.00am. You could have a rota who is making breakfast/chooses what to cook/set the table etc. If your teenagers don't normally eat breakfast, try things like pancakes or bacon or egg sandwiches...if you can get them from the shops.
 - If they are still in pyjamas – encourage them to get dressed whilst you do the clearing away...you could say 'why don't you get dressed whilst I clear away'.
 - At breakfast set out the plans for the day....break it up into blocks of time and be sure to indicate what food is going to be consumed. Teenagers always want to know when the next meal is and what is it going to be...they might have to be less fussy given the supermarket situation right now!
- Set out blocks of time
 - Morning
 - In the morning 9.30am – 12.30pm school work/parents WFH
 - Could all do it in kitchen or a room with a table downstairs
 - Or have teenagers do their work in bedrooms - but you need to check in subtly, with snacks or drinks, on the hour so you can gauge the work rate i.e. are they making tick tok videos or are they on face time with friends discussing how to solve a quadratic equation, working out the key features of a geographical landform or discussing a Brian Cox documentary set by the science department? Maybe they are on a virtual tour of the Tate Modern as set by the Art department.
 - Ask them how Frog is working? Do they need anything? Are they stuck etc? They may not want to discuss their learning with you – fairly normal for a teenager.

- Lunch
 - Have you teenagers make it! Let them set the table and eat together
 - Don't let them take lunch up to their bedroom – need to avoid too much isolation.
 - Discuss your WFH so all the attention is not on them.
 - Discuss the plans for the afternoon.
 - Eat slowly to use up time.

- Afternoon
 - If KS4/KS5 maybe more study

Otherwise, make the most of some downtime...

- You could have one to two hour 'siesta' or quiet time...teenagers chilling with their phones/tablets in their own bedrooms...everyone in the house needs some space and for teenagers time to check in with their peers.
- Make films on phone – docu style and share with everyone.
- Board games – some old school ones such as snakes and ladders or Cluedo...could set up a league and have prizes at the end of each week.
- Gardening – cleaning the patio, planting summer bulbs, cleaning out the shed or garage, tackling the weeding, sorting out the garden furniture or make a balcony window box or prepare a pot with bulbs.
- Exercise videos.
- Lego – find it in the loft and dump it all on the floor...who can make the best model?
- Reading time...the whole family reads their individual books for 30 mins.
- Write emails to grandparents/elderly relatives or call them.
- Make a playlist to listen to at dinner time or lunchtime.
- Learn to cook new things with weird ingredients...that were the only things left on supermarket shelves.
- Teenagers could have some time on their own ...xbox, social media etc. Important they engage with their peers.
- Rearrange furniture/ sort out wardrobes/drawers.
- Look at old photos.
- Send them to the shops to buy ingredients for a meal...see what they come back with!
- Decorate a room – teach them how to decorate a room – painting or even wallpapering!
- Household chores...seriously...cleaning a toilet, bath, descaling a showerhead.
- Domestic duties – learning how to use a washing machine and the different washes, how to iron a shirt or trousers, how to vacuum with precision.
- Get the beach games out...bowls, badminton, swingball to play in the garden.
- Learn something new – knitting, art, crocheting ...lots of clips on you tube. You might need a visit to Hobbycraft!
- It is ok for teenagers to have more screen time on their own...good for everyone to have space...no need to stress too much especially if they have completed school work in the morning and been involved in an activity in the afternoon.
- If allowed out...a run or brisk walk before dinner.

- Evening meal – you might just want to prepare this on your own in the kitchen after a hectic day of keeping everyone’s spirits up!
- Evening
 - Things listed above.
 - Plan a family holiday – give them a budget.
 - Watch a film from your film list.

Try to get your teenagers to go to bed at a reasonable time so they can be up for breakfast at 9.00am and it starts all over again ...it is important to keep boundaries in place e.g. bed times, phones and other devices on charge out of the bedroom at night and any other house rules you have.

Parents can have a well-earned glass of wine, beer or cup of tea and a debrief!

It is literally like Christmas day but with no presents and no relatives visiting!

You want to avoid

- Loneliness/isolation – having teenagers in their rooms all day...drag them out...they won’t realise it but they will be happier with some activities...usually after they have done them!
- Siblings arguing – probably had too much time together...separate and give them time to cool down ...we call it ‘take up time’ in teaching... and if two adults in the house could divide and conquer with activities after cooling off time.
- Over exposure to media reports on COVID-19 – anxiety etc.

If loved ones become ill – give your teenagers the facts – don’t hide things - use simple, honest and truthful language and explain what is known and not know - it is fine to say ‘I don’t know’.

Keep things as normal as possible – routine and structure is good...but with some flexibility....‘flexible normality’. This creates a sense of calmness during these strange times.

If and when the school does close, we will be in touch with weekly emails during the closure period...on a Wednesday morning.

However, the school is not closed yet, so we are trying to stick to routines!

Best wishes



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Co-Headteachers