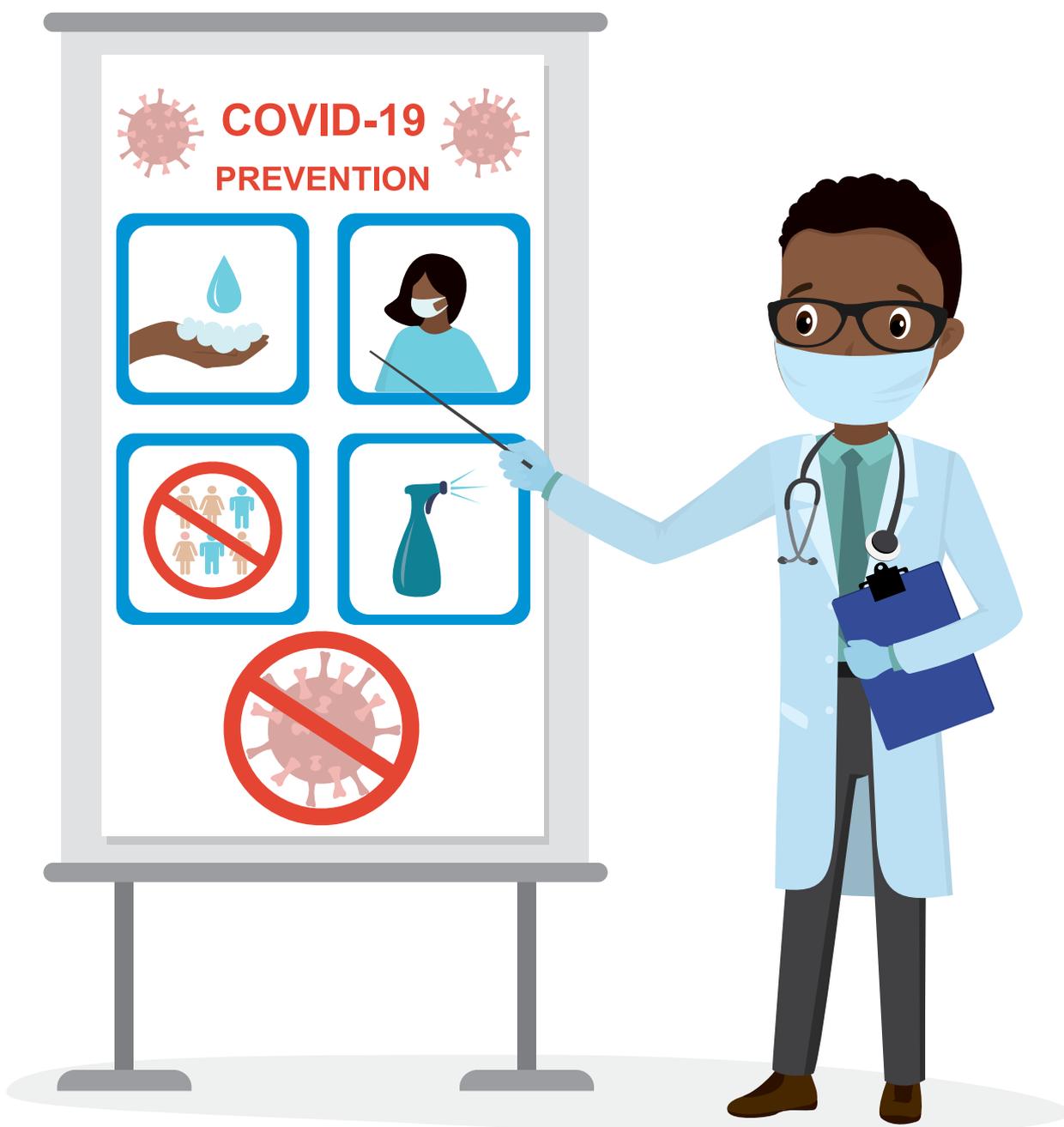




# ADVICE TO PARENTS

## SUPPORTING YOUR CHILDREN THROUGH THE COVID-19 LOCKDOWN

The Department of Basic Education recognises the need to help parents and guardians get through this lockdown period as effectively as possible. This simple set of guidelines is designed to provide advice and strategies to help parents support their children at this time.



# Guideline #1

Take care of your own mental health and emotional well-being



# Be kind to yourself



Lockdown is difficult. We are all dealing with fears, stresses and uncertainties. And, it can be even more difficult for families who are under financial pressures, who are dealing with physical or mental illnesses, who share a space with an abusive person, who live in a small space, or who have very few resources.

## What can parents do about this?

- Generally, your children will cope as well as you do.
- If you want your children to be calm and coping, then you have to try to be calm and coping.
- Children of all ages will react to your actions and attitudes, not just to what you say.
- Because of this, you need to find some private time and space to talk to other adults about your own fears, worries and stress. Do not let your children hear these discussions.
- If you do not have anyone to talk to, reach out to one of the many helplines available.
- You must try to regulate your own moods and anxieties, in order to present the best model possible for your children.
- Your children must feel that you are in control and making the best decisions possible for their well-being.

## Who to call for help

Service provider	National or provincial	Types of service	Contact number
Gender Based Violence Command Centre	National	Gender based violence helpline (GBV)	0800 428 428 *120*7867#
Gender Based Violence Command Centre	National	GBV helpline for the deaf and disabled community	Helpme GBV SMS 'help' to 31531
South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG)	National	Helpline for mental disorders, anxiety, depression and suicide	0800 456 789 0800 567 567 (suicide hotline)
CIPLA 24-hr Mental Health Helpline	National	Helpline for mental disorders, anxiety, depression and suicide	0800 456 789 WhatsApp: 076 88 22 77 5
National Crisis Line	National	National Crisis Line 24 hour telephonic counselling service dealing with all forms of abuse, HIV/AIDS, bereavement, suicide and eating disorders	0861 322 322
South African Police Services	National	Report a crime	08600 10111

Service provider	National or provincial	Types of service	Contact number
South African Police Services	National	Report a crime	08600 10111
South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG) - ADHD	National	ADHD Helpline	0800 55 44 33
Child Welfare South Africa	National	Report child abuse or neglect	0861 452 4110
Childline South Africa	National	Report child abuse or neglect	08000 55555
Police Child Protection Units	National	Report child abuse or neglect	10111 childprotect@saps.org.za
FAMSA – Family and Marriage Association of South Africa	National	Support & education during stressful times	(011) 975-7106/7 national@famsa.org.za
People Opposed to Women Abuse (POWA)	Gauteng	Domestic abuse helpline	011 642 4345/6 itumeleng@powa.co.za
Food Parcel Service	Eastern Cape	Food packages	043 707 6300
Food Parcel Service	Free State	Food packages	051 410 8339
Food Parcel Service	Gauteng	Food packages	011 241 8324
Food Parcel Service	KwaZulu-Natal	Food packages	033 846 3400
Food Parcel Service	Limpopo	Food packages	015 291 7500
Food Parcel Service	Mpumalanga	Food packages	013 754 9428
Food Parcel Service	Northern Cape	Food packages	053 802 4900
Food Parcel Service	North West	Food packages	018 397 3360
Food Parcel Service	Western Cape	Food packages	021 469 0235
South African Social Security Agency (SASSA)	National	Food Parcel Helpline and Registering for COVID-19 Grants	0800 601 011 grantenquiries@sassa.gov.za
Gauteng Government	Gauteng	Food parcel helpline	0800 428 8364 support@gauteng.gov.za

# Guideline #2

Take care of your children's mental health and emotional well-being



# Connect with your children



As parents and guardians, it is always important to connect with your children. But under conditions of stress or crisis, it is more important than ever to talk to your children, and to notice their behaviours. This is a time of great change and uncertainty for all people. Teenagers are at a phase in their lives when their friends and social connections are especially important to them, and lockdown due to COVID-19 has made this very difficult for them. Teenagers are also vulnerable to the effects of stress, anxiety and depression during this time.

## What can parents do about this?

- 1** *Start by asking your children what they know about the virus and the lockdown, and how they feel about these events.*
  - Show your children that you are giving them a safe space to openly and honestly share their thoughts. Listen attentively as they speak. Do not interrupt, do not correct what they are saying, do not laugh at or ridicule your children, and do not cut them off.
  - If children answer your questions with short or one-word answers, gently ask some probing questions, to encourage them to talk more. For example: ‘What do you mean by that?’ or ‘Can you tell me more about...’
  - Be patient. Many children will ‘blame’ their parents, and direct their frustration, anger, disappointment and boredom towards you.
  - As your children speak, make mental notes of their misconceptions about the situation and of their emotional states.
- 2** *Next, give children accurate, age-appropriate information to correct misconceptions, reduce anxiety, and to give them hope.*
  - Keep the information that you share simple but accurate.
  - Share this information in a calm, clear manner.
  - Do not make promises that you cannot keep, for instance, that you will not catch the virus. However, you can give them reassurances that you will try your very best to stay safe, and to keep your children safe.
  - Give your children hope. Talk about the fact that this will end, that the scientists and doctors will find a way to fight the virus, and that our lives will eventually go back to normal.
  - Answer your children’s questions as best as you can. Admit when you do not know something. Say something like: ‘That is a very good question. I don’t know the answer, but I will try to find out.’
  - Try to clear up any misconceptions or misunderstandings that your children may have about the virus or about the lockdown.

## Explaining the virus and lockdown to young children

- A virus is an illness, like flu or measles.
- There is a new virus in the world, called the Corona Virus.
- Because it is a brand-new virus, the doctors and scientists need some time to learn about it, so that they can stop this virus from making people sick.
- To give the doctors and scientists some time to learn about the virus, we all need to stay home for a while.
- Then, once the doctors and scientists say it is okay, we will slowly start to go back to school and work, so that we all stay safe.



## Explaining the virus and lockdown to pre-teens and teens

*Note: Use your discretion to decide how much information to share with your children. You do not want to raise their stress or anxiety.*

- A virus is an illness, like flu or measles.
- There is a new virus in the world, called the Corona Virus, or COVID-19. This stands for: Corona Virus Disease of 2019.
- The virus spreads between people who are in close contact with one another, like when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It can also be spread when you touch an infected surface or object, for instance, if someone has sneezed on a table, then you touch the table and transmit the virus to yourself through touching your mouth, nose or eyes.
- This virus affects people in different ways:
  - *Some people have the virus, but they don't feel sick at all. We say they are asymptomatic.*
  - *Most people feel sick for a week or two. They usually have a temperature, aches and pains in their body, and may have a cough. Then, they recover and are completely fine.*
  - *A small percentage of people become very ill, and may need to go to hospital for a while.*
- People younger than 18 are less likely to have symptoms, and less likely to get very sick. If they do get sick, they usually recover well.



- Because this is a new virus, doctors and scientists need some time to learn about it, so that they can develop a vaccination and better treatments.
- To give the doctors and scientists time to learn about the virus, we all need to stay home for a while.
- This lockdown period also gives our government time to prepare our public health system – to train hospital staff and put proper systems in place, to buy enough equipment for all hospitals, and to hire as many hospital staff as possible.
- Once the spread of the virus is under control, and our hospitals are ready to care for many sick people, the lockdown may slowly be lifted.
- People will start going back to work and school in a staggered manner – not all at once.
- Many of us will still have to be tested, and there will still be many rules to follow to ensure that the virus stays controlled.

**3** *Look for warning signs that your child is not coping. (Some of these warnings are more likely to be seen in teenagers.)*

- Feeling sad or crying when there is no apparent reason
- Anger and frustration when there is no apparent reason
- Not taking part in activities they would usually enjoy at home
- Loss of interest in spending time with family or friends via social media
- Arguing or fighting with family or friends on social media
- Tiredness and loss of energy
- Sleeping too much or struggling to sleep
- Changes in appetite
- Angry outbursts, disruptive or risky behaviour
- Self-harm (e.g. cutting, burning, or otherwise hurting themselves)

## **Dealing with children and teens who are not coping with lockdown**

- Talk to your children about aggressive or negative behaviour that you would like changed and give them clear alternatives for what you would like them to do instead.
- When their behaviour changes for the better, give them positive feedback about what you see (e.g. When you spoke calmly to me, I really appreciated it).
- Give your children a lot of love. Tell them that you love them. Listen to them when they talk to you. If you are in lockdown together, give them hugs and show physical affection.
- Give your children hope – talk about life after lockdown. Talk about seeing their friends again, about going back to school, about playing outside, and about their plans and dreams for the future.
- If the situation does not improve or even gets worse, reach out to one of the many helplines available.

# Guideline #3

Take care of your children's physical health



# Stay safe and healthy



There are simple rules that we must all follow to protect ourselves and our children from the virus.

## What can parents do about this?

*Teach your children to use the five golden rules to stay safe from COVID-19. Make sure that you model this behaviour for your children.*

- 1** Wash your hands with soap and water whenever you can. Rub your hands with the soap for twenty seconds. Wash your thumbs, the backs of your hands, and between your fingers.
- 2** Try not to touch your faces. Viruses usually get into our bodies through our mouths and noses, so we must try our best not to touch them.
- 3** Sneeze or cough into your elbows or into a tissue. If you use a tissue, throw it away.
- 4** When you have to go out, stand at least 1.5 metres away from other people. Do not hug, hold hands or touch other people. If you can, wear a mask when you go out.
- 5** If you feel sick with a temperature, aches or a cough, you must tell an adult.

# Guideline #4

Structure a daily routine with your children



# Routines make life feel safer and more normal



As parents and guardians, we need to build a sense of security and normalcy for our children as they wait to return to school. We need to keep our children connected to their 'normal lives' by encouraging them to do as many of their regular activities as possible.

## What can parents do about this?

- 1 *Work with your children to structure a routine that works for your family.*
  - Sit down with some paper and a pen and hold a discussion with your children about routines.
  - Explain that routines will make life easier for everyone in the household, with fewer arguments and conflicts.
  - Also explain that lockdown is stressful for you as parents, and that having your children's co-operation will support and help you enormously.
  - Talk about the kinds of activities that should be included in a daily routine. Encourage your children to suggest these activities. Remind your children that they will return to their 'normal lives' and they must not lose their knowledge and skills during this time.
  - Explain that depending on the ages of your children, they may have different routines.
  - Make sure that your children's routines also work for you. Ensure that children do some of the chores that need to be done and that meals take place at times that suit the whole family.
- 2 *Work with your children to ensure that they follow their routines.*
  - Once routines are designed, ask your children if they accept their routine, and if they will try their best to follow the routine.
  - Make a simple chart of each child's routine or get each child to make his/her chart.
  - Display these charts somewhere that they can easily be seen.
  - For the first few days, 'train' your children to follow their routines by reminding them to check their routines, and by following up to see that they are doing all activities. This will be hard work at first, but it will make your life easier in time.
  - Every few days, hold a meeting to see if your children are following their routines.
  - If not, discuss the reasons why. See if you need to make any small changes to the routines.
  - Do not be too strict or rigid about the routines – do not add to your stress. But do have some consequences if one of your children is not trying to follow the routine at all.

## Activities to include in a daily routine

- 1 Sleep.** Children should get 9-10 hours of sleep per night. Teenagers should get 8-9 hours of sleep per night.
- 2 Washing and dressing.** Encourage children to wash and dress every day.
- 3 Meals.** Try to schedule fairly regular mealtimes. If you can, try to provide your children with 3 meals per day, and 1-2 healthy snacks. Try to have a family conversation at one of the daily meals.
- 4 Chores.** Try to schedule 1-3 hours of chores per day for children, depending on their ages, and on what needs to be done in your household. Chores should include things like making of beds, washing dishes, sweeping, etc. Avoid sending children on chores that require them to leave the house, although they can work in your yard.
- 5 Exercise.** It is very important for children to exercise every day. Exercise makes everyone feel better. Think of exercises and activities that can be done in your lockdown space. These can be simple activities, like running on the spot, jumping jacks, squats and push-ups.
- 6 Learning.** For younger children, up to Grade 3, schedule around 1.5 hours of learning time per day. For Grade 4-6 children, schedule around 2.5 hours per day. And for Grade 7-12 learners, try to schedule between 3-4 hours of learning time per day.
- 7 Reading.** Really try to encourage your children to read during this time. Try your best to access reading materials for your children. Schedule 1-2 hours for reading per day.
- 8 Free time.** Schedule all the remaining time in the day as free time. Allow your children to spend this time as they choose. They will appreciate and enjoy this time.

## Sample routine for Grade 4-6 child

08h00	Wake up, wash and dress
08h30	Breakfast
09h00	Morning chores
10h00	Snack and free time
10h30	Learning time
12h30	Free time
13h00	Lunch
14h00	Free time or rest
15h00	Exercise
15h30	Reading
16h30	Afternoon chores
17h30	Free time
18h30	Supper and clean up
19h30	Wash and change
20h00	Free time
21h30	Go to bed

# Guideline #5

What to do during 'Learning Time'



# Learning should be meaningful and reasonable



The Department of Basic Education (DBE) does not expect parents to become teachers during lockdown. Nor do we expect children to teach themselves the curriculum. Please accept our assurances that once your children return to school, 'recovery' plans will be put in place to ensure that your children are taught what they need to know. However, we do want parents and guardians to ensure that meaningful learning takes place during the lockdown period.

It is very important for all children to 'stay connected' to school life. This does not mean that they have to be in touch with the school. Rather, it means that they must not forget what they have already learnt, and they must not forget what it is like to listen, to read, to learn and to complete tasks. They need to regularly do activities like revising and memorising what they have previously learnt; reading and understanding texts; completing written tasks; and practicing Maths and Science calculations. These tasks will prepare your children for when they return to school. They will be masters of what they have already learnt, and they will be used to the processes of learning. They will be equipped for the hard work and faster pace that faces them when they return to school.

## What can parents do about this?

- 1** *Make an appropriate space for your children to do their work and help them to organise their resources.*
  - Arrange a suitable workspace for your children to do their learning. This can be a space at a kitchen or dining table, or it can even be a space on the floor. Encourage your children to always work in the same space, as part of their routine.
  - Encourage your children to get all of their schoolbooks out, and to make sure they are properly organised.
  - Also collect all the stationery in the house and from your children's school bags. Try to ensure that they have access to pens, pencils, and any other equipment that they may need.
  - Finally, collect any reading resources that are available in your home. This includes textbooks, DBE Workbooks, reading books, magazines or pamphlets, novels, newspapers, the Bible, etc.
- 2** *Take advantage of any programmes provided by the school.*
  - If your children attend schools that have the resources to communicate with parents and provide a lockdown learning programme, please take advantage of this.
  - Support your children as best as you can to complete the lockdown learning programme.
- 3** *Go through the lists of suggested 'Learning Activities' that follow and build these into your children's daily routines.*
  - A list of age-appropriate activities is included below for each phase of learning.
  - These activities can be done without additional resources, or access to a computer or the internet.

- All of these activities are worthwhile and will keep your children connected to school and learning.

## Activities for Grade R-3 learners

*Note: Young learners need more help with learning activities, but an older sibling can also help.*

### 1 Counting

- Collect small stones, beans or pasta for your children to use for counting.
- Show your children how to practice counting using the stones.
- If you have time, teach your children to count higher than they already can.
- Show your children how to use the stones to count in 2s, 3s, 4s, 5s and 10s.
- Show your children how to use the stones to count backwards.

### 2 Addition and Subtraction

- Use the stones to help your children practice adding and subtracting. In Grade 1 and 2, they must practice adding and subtracting up to 10. In Grade 3, children can practice mentally adding up to 20.

### 3 Playing shop

- Put price tags on some items in your house, for example food products, furniture, or clothes.
- Make some play money by tearing up pieces of paper and writing the value of notes and coins on the paper.
- Take turns to be the shopkeeper or the customer with your children.



- Check your children's calculations, to make sure that they understand how to use money.

#### 4 Letter Sounds

- Fold and tear up a piece of paper into small squares.
- Write a letter of the alphabet on each small square.
- Spread the pieces of paper out. Point at different letters and tell your children to say the sounds.
- Ask your children to build different words using the letter squares. As they put the sounds together, they must say the sounds, and then read the words.
- Next, ask your children to write these words down. If you don't have paper, use one of your children's schoolbooks.

#### 5 Reading

- Tell your children to practice reading using their reading book or DBE Workbook.
- Go back to the beginning of the book and start there.
- If your children cannot read a word, help them to sound it out.
- Once your children have read the story, ask them to tell you what it was about.

#### 6 Writing

- If you don't have paper, use one of your children's schoolbooks.
- Give your children a topic to draw and write about, like: your best friend; what you want for your birthday; your favourite games; your family.
- Tell your children to first think of what they want to draw and write.
- Next, tell them to draw a picture of their story.
- Then, with Grade R or Grade 1 children, ask them to write one or two labels of things in the picture.
- With Grade 2 or 3 children, ask them to write one or two sentences about the picture. Help them to start the sentences if needed.
- Once they have finished writing, ask your children to talk to you about what they have written. Ask questions and give them feedback.

## Activities for Grade 4-9 learners

### 1 Multiplication Tables (Grades 4-6)

- Tell your children to revise the different multiplication tables until they know them by heart.

### 2 Mental Maths

- Ask your children some oral Maths questions and see if they can answer correctly and quickly.
- These can be addition or subtraction, multiplication or division questions, or even a combination of questions. Start from simple questions, and then keep making up more difficult questions. Use the calculator on your phone to check if your children answer correctly!

### 3 Maths Revision and Calculations

- Go to the beginning of your children's Maths Textbooks or DBE Maths Workbooks.



- Tell your children to read and work through one or two activities per day and see if they can still do all the calculations.
- Try to give your children other examples to complete, like the ones in the Textbook or Workbook.

#### **4** *Reading and Summarising*

- Tell your children to practice reading from their Home Language and FAL Textbooks or DBE Language Workbooks (up to Grade 6).
- Go back to the beginning of the book and start there.
- Tell your children to practice reading the text aloud, until they can read it fluently, correctly and with expression. Then, they should come and read the text aloud to you.
- If there are questions about the text, tell your children to answer the questions in writing. If you don't have paper, tell your children to write the answers in one of their school exercise books.
- Next, write these sentence starters on a piece of paper, and tell your children to complete as many sentences as they can in their writing book. Do this for every text that your children read.
  - *This text is about...*
  - *The main character is...(if applicable)*
  - *I liked it / did not like it because...*
  - *I learnt that....*
  - *This reminds me of...*
  - *I think .... did the right thing / the wrong thing because....*

- *If I were...(character's name) I would have...(if applicable)*

#### **5 Revision of other subjects**

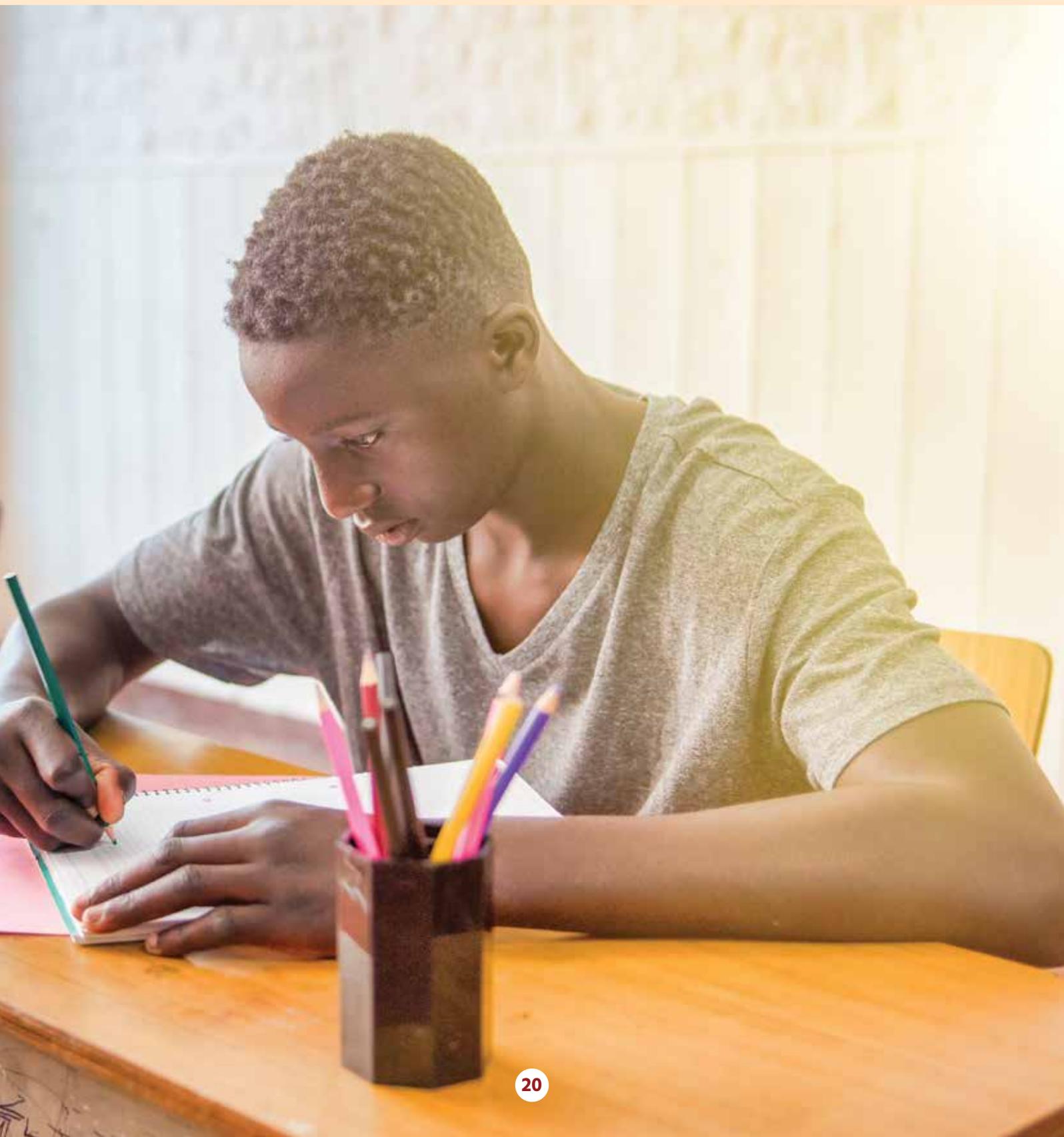
- Tell your children to gather their textbooks and exercise books for each subject.
- Every day, they should focus on a different subject to revise.
- They should start from the beginning of the textbook or exercise book and read through and revise all notes. Then, they must try to complete all activities, even those they did in Term 1.
- As they do this, tell your children to ensure that they understand what they are reading and doing. If not, they should discuss this with you, an older sibling, or they should phone a classmate who may be able to help.
- Tell your children to try and memorise as much information as possible, in preparation for going back to school.
- If your children have any old test papers from Term 1, they must try to work through the test paper again, writing the answers to questions in their exercise book.

### **Activities for Grade 10-12 learners**

- 1** Remind your children that before the lockdown, they had already completed almost one third of the year's work.
- 2** Explain that if they revise, understand and memorise all this work, and practice doing all the Maths, Maths Literacy and Science calculations they have learnt, they will have mastered one third of the year's work.
- 3** Encourage your children to do some Mathematics or Maths Literacy revision and practice every day. If there is something they do not understand, they must see if you or an older sibling can help. Alternately, they should phone a friend, relative or neighbour who may be able to help.
- 4** Encourage your children to do some Home Language and FAL (First Additional Language) revision and practice every day. This should include as much reading as possible, because in Grades 10-12, learners are required to read prescribed literature each year. Your children should have copies of these texts, whether they be poems, short stories, novels or dramas.
- 5** Ask your children to please do some additional revision and memorisation of another subject every day. They should read through the textbook and any notes in their exercise books. They should read through any questions or activities and should try to complete these independently. They should also write summaries of all information and should memorise these summaries.
- 6** For Grades 10-12, it is much more important to try and access ongoing teaching of key subjects. Start by looking at the TV and Radio schedules provided – check if there are any programmes that apply to your children and encourage them to watch or listen to these programmes.
- 7** Monitor your children to see that they do 3-4 hours of learning work every day.
- 8** In the FET Phase it is important for learners to stay up-to-date, to understand the concepts and skills that have been taught, and to practice using them on a regular basis.

- 9 Speak to your children about their work. Find out what they feel comfortable about, and what concerns them.
- 10 See if you can arrange help from an older sibling, neighbour or friend if required. But do not break the rules of lockdown.

**Note:** *If you have access to a smartphone, tablet or computer in your household, try to arrange for your children to access any online resources that seem useful. Some of these resources are 'zero-rated', which means they do not require any data. This is noted on the list of online resources provided.*



# Guideline #6

Use technology effectively



# All learning should be active

Do not assume that your children are necessarily learning if they are watching an educational programme – they could easily be daydreaming! It is important to help your children to use technology effectively for the purposes of learning.

## What can parents do about this?

- 1** *Take advantage of TV, Radio or Online Learning Programmes that you can access.*
  - A list of Learning Programmes and Resources accompanies this guide.
  - Go through this list carefully to look for programmes or resources that may benefit your children.
  - In particular, encourage your Grade 10-12 children to watch TV programmes that teach Mathematics, Science or Language skills and concepts.
  - Also look for any digital reading resources that you can download for your children to read on a smartphone, tablet or computer. Note that 'zero-rated' websites are free – accessing these websites does not require any data.
- 2** *Help your children select programmes that are relevant and build these into their routines.*
  - Look through programme guides together to select programmes that are relevant.
  - Do this in advance – look through the programme schedules at the start of the week.
  - Build these activities into your children's routines as part of their 'learning time'.
  - Ensure that there is a balance to your children's learning activities – they should not spend all their time watching TV or on a smart phone.
- 3** *Ensure that your children are prepared for television or radio learning.*
  - Before the start of the programme, ensure that your children have the correct textbooks and/or exercise books with them.
  - They should also have a pen, pencil, ruler and any other any stationery that may be required.
  - It is also a good idea to have a dictionary ready to be used, particularly for older children.
  - Help your children to put the lesson that they are going to experience into context. Do this by looking for the lesson topic in the textbook and going over the previous lesson.
- 4** *Monitor your children during the programme.*
  - Check in on your children as they watch or listen to the programme.
  - Encourage them to take notes during the programme, to remind them of what they have learnt. They should also write down any questions that they have.
- 5** *Hold a brief discussion about what has been learnt.*
  - At the end of the programme, check to see that your children have written some notes.
  - Next, hold a brief discussion about the programme. You could ask questions like:
    - Was that programme interesting? Why or why not?
    - What did you learn from it?
    - Is there anything you didn't understand or are unsure of?
    - Do you have any other questions about this topic?
    - Have you read about this in your textbook?

**6** *Plan any follow-up sessions that are required.*

- If something was unclear or confusing, you could try to help your children further by:
  - Looking for another lesson on the topic, and scheduling this into the routine
  - Going over the lesson content together
  - Asking an older sibling, friend or relative for help

