



WELLINGTON
COLLEGE

TOP 10 TIPS FOR WELLINGTONIANS

1. Know your routine

Your school timetable already gives routine and structure to your day. Each evening look at the following day and write out your lessons and look at your breaks. For at least one break (probably the afternoon break) write down something that you will do – if you don't you will end up doing nothing. Your timetable should be built around what you need to do to take care of yourself as well.

2. Stay connected

It is REALLY important to stay connected with your friends, especially your friends who you know will make you laugh but also who you can be honest with and be open about how your day has been – share wins and failures – and laugh about them. Avoid phone calls and emails – a short video call can make all the difference. Make an effort to schedule group calls with friends too but make sure that no one is left out and that you are contributing to their feelings of loneliness and isolation rather than helping them. If you can meet a friend for a socially distanced walk, then do – use weekends and the afternoons to be social.

3. Maintain relationships with College staff

Your tutors and HMs will be making regular contact with you – make sure you engage with them and are honest with them. Answer the question “How are you?” honestly and with thought, not with the standard Wellingtonian answer of “Good”. Prepare for a 1-2-1 tutorial or meeting with your HM by writing down what you think they should know. A good way of doing this is making a list with three columns:

1. Three things which have gone really well this week – the “celebrations”
2. Three things which have not gone as well as planned – “the ‘Oh Wells’”
3. **Anything** you need help with

This enables you to make the most of a tutorial and not just see it as a ‘tick box exercise’. If you are struggling to understand something covered in a lesson, email a member of staff and ask for help, especially if you don't feel comfortable staying after a Teams Lesson or asking in the lesson itself. You are not alone and staff are there to listen to your concerns and to help your understanding.

4. Don't overwork yourself

Working from home means that you have to be really disciplined – not only to get down to work but also to stop. Take time every few days to look at your life-balance. If you are regularly finding yourself completing school work, emailing and sat in front of a computer screen outside of the hours of 8-7pm AND working all weekend it is time for you to tell someone and ask for help. You are at risk of suffering from burn out and risk your own mental health. Staff at school will praise you for setting your own boundaries and taking care of your wellbeing. Working in isolation and on your own a lot can mean that you lose perspective on what is “normal” because there is no one around you to bring you back to reality or drag you to the V&A.

5. Keep regular sleeping hours

A good night-time routine is just as important as your daytime one. Reduce screen time in the evenings, plan time to wind down and relax at the end of the working day. Your pattern of sleep has the power to impact your energy levels, mood, relationships and your performance at work. Protect your sleep schedule and establish a good routine before bed.

6. Get outside

Get out of the house at least once a day - to move your body, and expose yourself to full spectrum light. Your body needs vitamin D3, provided to you by natural light which you will get during daylight hours. Build this into your routine. Use it to multi-task – an hour with an audio book or walking whilst speaking to friends on a call. Use it to run / jog / exercise in the garden. Just do it. Getting a daily dose of vitamin D3 will not only benefit your mental health and help to combat symptoms of SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder), but can also help strengthen your immune system.

7. Don't put pressure on yourself and reduce reliance on social media

We will be living with the impacts of COVID-19 for a long time into the future. Concentrate on the things you can control and not the things you can't. Be realistic about what you want to achieve whilst you are at home and don't compare yourself to others. Reduce the time you spend on social media – people tend to only post positive images and stories on there about what they are achieving and how they feel – the reality is likely to be different – but these posts can leave you feeling inadequate. Can you (and your friends) challenge yourself to come off social media for 24 hours once a week? FOMO has become a big issue during CV19 – “You're having a good time without me”. This can worsen feelings of loneliness and isolation for everyone. One way to normalise some of the FOMO is to show all parts of your journey – destigmatise failures by posting a photograph of a disastrous cake you have made or when you have split your coffee all over your Surface. We are all in this together, we are all vulnerable. By sharing the not so good bits, it helps foster that sense of connectedness and it allows everyone to think “I feel that way too.”

8. Know where to get help and support

It is a reality – almost one in five individuals are likely to experience some form of mental health during the coronavirus pandemic. KNOW WHERE TO GET HELP. Read the support booklet which was sent out at the start of term even if you feel ok now so you know what to do when you don't feel that great. Seeking help is a strength and not a weakness. Know yourself: how will you know when things are not as they should be and who has your back? Consider asking a family member or friend to “have your back” – someone who will be honest with you and let you know if they are worried about you.

9. Recharge at the weekends

Try and have a bit of structure at the weekends too so that you reach Sunday evening feeling you have had a break but have also reconnected with your family, with the outdoors or other things you enjoy – music, drama, films. Perhaps try and plan something a bit different – a virtual dinner party, an online quiz with your friends and family. Perhaps try something you have never done before – paint a picture, try making a sculpture – there are hundreds of crafty type things you can get on line. Could you do this as a group of friends (and then have a good giggle at what you have made) or with your family? Don't be tempted to sit in your room on your own watching Netflix. This is not re-charging and you will end up feeling more tired and not really in the right space to start Monday. You need a break from routine and a break from 'boring'.

10. Thinking about others – gratitude and compassion

Having a healthy sense of compassion for others and gratitude is a very good antidote to the dangers of becoming focused on the negative over the positive. At the end of every day write down 3 things to be grateful for and write down who you need to thank for things that have happened that day – a family member who has cooked a nice evening meal for you or sent you a nice message; a friend who has helped you with some work; a teacher who has provided you with some help. Doing this is not only helpful to those you are grateful to but it is also helpful for us as well – by showing compassion towards ourselves and others can improve mental wellbeing, enables us to sleep better, makes us more emotionally resilient, strengthens our relationships with others and boosts our immune systems.

