

EDUCATOR'S DESK

MANY schools are conducting online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, implementation and monitoring of online learning is important to achieve the best possible learning outcomes.

Below are the top 10 concerns or questions parents may have about how Sri Bestari International School (SBIS) has embraced e-learning during the Covid-19 crisis:

Q: Does SBIS use a centralised platform for online learning?

A: Yes. SBIS uses Schoology as its main virtual platform for students, parents and teachers to keep parents updated about their children's learning progress, updates, homework submission and conferences. The use of G Suite and Zoom also enable students to hold group discussions and meet their friends virtually.

Q: Are children's motivation to learn affected during online learning?

A: Yes, so it is important to pique their interests and relate the subjects taught with the current crisis. To this end, SBIS implemented the Special Learning programme with thematic learning and industry analysis about Covid-19.

Thematic learning based on science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM) were incorporated as part of SBIS' learning outcomes. Bestarians worked in groups to analyse industries or companies of their interest, specifically focusing on how these companies innovated to adapt to the pandemic.

Bestarians were given the freedom to choose the industry of their interest and be "consultants" to companies to propose creative and innovative solutions to adapt to the current climate. The objectives of this Covid-19 industry analysis was to promote fun learning and collaboration among peers and provide opportunities for Bestarians to interview industry entrepreneurs (through webinar sessions) selected by team members to be engaged

Concerns about e-learning

global citizens.

Q: What if I have issues with Internet connectivity and my child misses lessons quite frequently?

A: Pre-recorded sessions for core subjects remain one of the new initiatives that SBIS has carried out during the MCO period, other than sending out worksheets, notes and lesson updates via our learning environment platform. Students who miss lessons can watch the videos uploaded by teachers and catch up at their own paces. Besides that, students can rewatch videos for revision purposes.

Q: Is it true that there aren't any fun or hands-on experiments or activities conducted during online lessons?

A: During the MCO, the school has conducted various programmes and lessons involving experiments and activities such as arts and crafts, Fun with Maths, Fun with Science, Science Explorers, and My Little MBA, to enhance students' analytical, problem-solving and observation skills. Music lessons are not limited to just singing and dancing; they also incorporate music technology lessons using GarageBand.

Q: Will my child become passive during online lessons?

A: SBIS has incorporated various activities such as Creative Corners, Virtual TED Talk Sessions and storytelling to unleash children's creativity and ability to express their thoughts. Each child presented the creative work he had accomplished at home, thus becoming a teacher to his peers.

This promoted synergy and competitiveness for children to think out of the box. It also encouraged students to learn ICT skills using Google Slides and explore

their creativity in presentation at a much younger age. "What's Trending" is our daily session to groom Bestarians into engaged citizens and be aware of what is happening around the globe.

Q: Should I be concerned about the screen time my child is being exposed to?

A: The school has revised its schedule to ensure each core subject is divided into three segments: content delivery via face-to-face sessions, classwork sessions (off-screen work for students during which teachers remain online to address questions) and focus groups (personalised sessions for selected students). Screen time is regulated and extended lunch breaks are awarded to ensure students and parents are given the rest they need during online learning.

Q: How do the teachers assess students' progress and learning outcomes?

A: Our learning platform enables students to upload their homework and projects to be assessed online. Besides that, teachers use fun methods such as online quizzes and class participation to ensure students achieve the intended learning objectives.

Q: My child is introverted and shy. Will online learning be effective for him?

A: Subject teachers take daily attendance for each period and require students to turn on their webcams throughout online lessons. Parents will be contacted for verification if their child is absent from our virtual school on that day. It has been observed that children who are quiet tend to express themselves more boldly through online chatboxes during lessons.

Q: Do students attend society meetings?

A: The school's Google Calendar delineates



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academic lessons from 8am to 3:30pm, after which virtual society meetings are held as an optional after-school programme. The online calendar is to ensure students and parents keep track of the revised schedules.

Q: Will children lose out on festive and fun celebrations because the school is closed?

A: Not at all. The school recently celebrated Teachers' Day and Hari Raya, during which there was even the singing of Negaraku and SBIS' school song. The celebrations were a combination of pre-recorded and live performances, coupled with lovely messages dedicated to teachers and our Muslim friends. Embracing diversity and getting the school together virtually was made possible thanks to the partnership between the school and parents, who are both committed to bringing out the best of the children at SBIS.

■ For enquiries about SBIS' next intake, call the Admission Department at 03-6263 9923 (ext.201/209) or email info_sbis@bestari.edu.my