

Schools change forever

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“Parents will still want their kids to attend up until Year 9 or 10 at least, to be attending a place where they know they will be well looked after for socialisation and safety reasons.

“You could say kids need only to come to school two or three days a week because they can do a lot of the other learning on their own at home, but there is no one to look after them at home.

“I think we are going to see different kinds of things happening at school where they are following much more individualised pathways that technology allows them to do.” Today, though, if you grabbed someone from Victorian England and put them into a modern day classroom they would still recognise many parts of it.

They would see a teacher leading the discussion, see children at times sitting up and paying attention.

They would not be so comfortable with the way in which children work more interactively and are encouraged to have a lot more to say in class.

Dr Bezzina says: “I do not envisage we will wake up one day and the whole world will be turned on its head.

“But by the time our kinder kids get to Year 13 they will have a far more individually-tailored learning experience.

“It will challenge the way in which we look at the nature of families’ responsibility for kids and what we do with kids during the day. That is one of the functions that schools serve.”

Others also believe teachers of the future will be guides to learning rather than lecturers and school hours will not be set in stone.

Global education surveys indicate that students’ interpersonal skills will be their



most valued asset, ahead of academic knowledge.

Hard copy books will be scarce and online content the premier source.

NSW Secondary Principals’ Council deputy president Andrew Newman believes set school hours will not keep pace with the pace and flexibility of learning online.

“The ability to work with other people and share information, debate and problem solve — those are the sort of skills that will be absolutely essential,” he says.

Parramatta Catholic Diocese executive director of schools Greg Whitby agrees schools need to focus on the 21st century skills of communication, collaboration, creativity and critical thinking.

The skills that globally competent students of the future will require to successfully navigate school, university and a career are likely to include:

- an appreciation of cultural differences
- an ability to comfortably manage change
- problem solving abilities,
- an understanding of global issues.

Already in cutting edge NSW government schools students are taking special classes with their teachers online from home in a unique project known as “Cloud School”.



Set for SUCCESS

Think you’ve got everything you need to set your child up for a happy year at school? Don’t forget to pack these essentials.



Laura Cencigh-Albulario

Back-to-school spending recently topped \$72 billion in the US, according to a report by the US National Retail Federation. The same report found that families with school-aged children spent an average of more than \$630 on shoes, clothing, supplies and electronics. If the frenzied crowds at local shopping centres in recent weeks are any indication, Australia isn’t far behind.

With the new school year now in full swing, you’ve probably ticked everything off your back-to-school checklist, but does your child really have everything they need to succeed? From good nutrition to plenty of sleep and a healthy approach to learning, there are several fundamental tools far more important than the latest Frozen pencil case.

Plenty of sleep

Insufficient sleep interferes with day-to-day productivity

and can turn little angels into teachers’ nightmares. Preliminary evidence also suggests that long-term intellectual development suffers when children — particularly in their younger years — are short-changed on the brain development that occurs during sleep.

Sleep Health Foundation chair Professor David Hillman says up to 20 per cent of teenagers aren’t getting enough sleep on a regular basis. He believes the “technological invasion” of bedrooms is partly to blame and suggests collecting all personal electronic devices before bed time.

“It’s important that parents appreciate the fact that children need more sleep than they do,” Professor Hillman adds. Primary school students require between 10 and 11 hours of sleep each night, while nine hours will suffice for high school students.

Healthy snacks

Children have higher sugar

needs than of adults, and can become irritable and distracted when their blood sugar drops. Nutritionist Emma Sgourakis says packing lunch boxes with plenty of fruit is the best way to ensure their sugar needs are met: “Chop them up so they’re easy to grab, and include lots of colours so it’s visually appealing”. Dehydrated fruits are good for a quick sugar fix, but check the sulphur content, particularly if your child suffers from asthma or allergies. Sgourakis encourages parents to venture beyond the sandwich to create balanced and interesting lunches, including things like baked potatoes, chopped up meat from last night’s dinner, vegetable sticks and cheese.

Something to sip on

Hydration is another important element in supporting concentration, but contrary to popular belief, water isn’t necessarily the best option. “Plain water only does so much — you need sugar





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