

Many of us are going through a big transition in our life right now. Due to this global pandemic, we all are trying to adjust to a new normal with a variety of different changes and challenges in our lives. Some of us had to leave Kenya with possibly no intention to return, while others have left Kenya with intention to return but have no idea when that return flight will be. All of us are experiencing a big change as we have started online learning, which is a huge change for both students and their teachers. However, none of us are alone in this unique experience. About 90% of the world's schools have closed and moved to online schooling according to UNESCO. People all over the world are trying to figure out new norms and routines during this time.

No matter what situation you are in right now, there are waves of different emotions we are all experiencing. Your family might be feeling frustrated, confused, overwhelmed, surprised, sad, angry, and many more. Some days are going to be better than other days, and it is okay to feel mixed emotions during this time. Spend time talking with your children about how they're feeling so they are able to name it and process it.

Change creates loss. Many of the students will need to have a space to grieve their losses. These will look different for everyone, whether its grief from losing time with friends, grief from change in routines, grief from not being able to tell someone goodbye, or grief from losing important events that were planned. Don't be afraid of the homesickness or the feelings of grief. It is a normal and healthy part of the process. Help your children acknowledge this grief so they can work through some or all of the grief stages: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. It may be beneficial to help your child make a list of their losses and talk through about them together.

We must have grace for ourselves and for our children. In abnormal circumstances people act differently, because they've lost the familiar in their life and face many unknowns. Below is a list of common reactions during transition:

- People are more self-centered than normal. We worry about things on a far bigger scale than normal.
- People react out of proportion to circumstances. This comes out in our emotions as a result of different situations.
- We can forget to follow our normal routines. Everyone is focused on survival right now, and we often overlook normal routines of reading stories before bed, helping children regulate, etc.

Below are a list of various ideas that may help your family and student(s) through this time of transition and change:

- If you have left Kenya or are leaving then your child may want to have a special object that is important to them that reminds them of their time in Kenya.
- Look through pictures of good memories, old school events, friends, etc.
- Take time to be thankful for the little things. When we are in transition we may overlook the positives and the little things that bring us enjoyment. Find things to be thankful for throughout each day.
- Allow your child to express themselves through art about this experience.
- Have a "funeral" or a special time to remember things that your child may have lost.

- Ensure that both you and your children are eating, sleeping, exercising, and engaging in stress reducing activities.
- Allow your student(s) to express both the positives and negatives of their experience and help them begin to accept that there are both.
- Find ways for your children to socialize with friends, such as sending an emailing or making a phone call.

Our Rosslyn teachers and staff are quite adept at working with students in transition. We encourage you to reach out to your student's teachers or the support team in your student's school if you have any questions. Please see the contacts below of individuals in each school who may be able to assist you. We are here to partner with you in helping your student(s) through this time. Also, you'll find a "Transition Workbook" that you can do with your child if you have left Kenya permanently.

Elementary School:

Chaplain - Trina Seigrist

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Counselor - Rachel Ritton

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Middle School:

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Counselor - Joanne Heugel

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Spiritual Life Director - Dave Matlak

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