

Dear Parents and Carers,

This has so far been one of the strangest weeks of my whole career. School is eerily quiet without you all and we miss you all terribly. Throughout this period of closure, teachers would like to stay in touch with the children in their class. On Friday, you will receive e-mails and guidance that will allow children to use Seesaw (available online at web.seesaw.me and as an app on most devices). The idea is that children can post a few times per week (if they wish) to show their teacher what they've been up to - this might be work completed, activities they are using to pass the time with family or just a message to say hello and let us know how they are doing. Teachers will be checking Seesaw at least twice a week to see what children are up to for as long as they are well and are able to.

We hope you all had a productive day on your first day of home schooling, but I know that lots of people are feeling stressed, overwhelmed and under pressure by everything that's happening. This includes the work being sent home for your children. I wanted to just give my perspective on it all as a Headteacher and as a parent and I hope this will help you.



A few points to note first:

1) This is not Home Schooling. This is an unprecedented emergency situation impacting on the whole world. This is, at best, distance learning. In reality, because none of us know what we're doing or what's right and wrong here, we need to take each day as it comes and just do our best!

2) You are, and always have been, your child's primary educator. If you decide that your child isn't going to engage with anything sent home and is going to spend the entire period playing in the dirt, or baking, or watching TV, then that is your choice. That is your right. There is nothing to stress or feel guilty about.

3) Schools don't know what they're doing either. We had no notice, no preparation time and we were not told to 'continue to plan lessons as normal and just send them home' – that's not possible. If it were, we'd all be out of a job!

4) It is absolutely not possible to facilitate distance learning with a primary aged child and work from home at the same time. The very idea is nonsense. If you're trying to do that, stop now. You can certainly have activities where your child learns, but your focus is your job, and survival. Again, unprecedented. Stop trying to be superheroes.

So, a few FAQs:

I'm not doing any work with my kids. All they're doing is building Lego, cooking and playing outside. All of this is learning -very valuable learning. Give yourself and them a break.

How can I get three different lots of work done with 3 different children of different ages?

You can't, stop trying. If they're old enough, try to get them to do little bits independently. Otherwise try to do something they can all engage with, reading a story together, some free writing, baking etc.

So what's the bare minimum you'd expect? My ideal for the children in our school would be as follows:

- ✓ A bit of reading every day (independent or to them or via audiobook etc)
- ✓ Some free writing now and then. If they'll keep a diary, great. If not, would they draw a comic?
- ✓ Practise basic maths, learn times tables off by heart
- ✓ Practical hands on maths. Be that via cooking, cleaning, outside or some maths games, physical or digital.
- ✓ Some fine motor work. Lego, cutting, playdough, tidying up small toys.
- ✓ Physical exercise everyday
- ✓ Some art/music where possible through the week. Doesn't need to be guided.
- ✓ If old enough get them to independently work on a project. This is great for keeping brains ticking over. Ask them to research in a book or online and putting together something to present to you or family.
- ✓ If younger, lots of imaginative free play, the more independent the better.

We will be updating the tasks on our website, but this is just a guide...there is so much out there online, I suggest that you use what you can and don't try to do it all.

Please remember that you are doing enough. You are loving your children and families and supporting them through a difficult time. Look after yourself and STAY AT HOME. Minimising stress is absolutely vital in a time like this for mental health. Don't let this be something that stresses you.

Take care, we will keep in touch!

Regards,



Sylvie Newman
Executive Headteacher