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How to support home learning

Home Learning and Working from Home

One of the challenges we face at the moment is trying to be productive in our jobs whilst working at home and yet also trying to keep our children doing something productive (or at least occupied!). This is a frequent reason that parents and carers are getting in touch with school in terms of asking how to best manage the situation. We want to reiterate that it is perfectly normal to find this balancing act incredibly difficult! Whatever happens, remember that whenever children come back to school, we will get them back on track.

We know as parents and teachers that it is easier to generate enthusiasm for learning when you are working with a larger group of children than it is with a small group of your own children at home. However, you are managing it, and however it feels, please remember that you are doing the best job that you can do. This situation is unprecedented and so please be kind to yourself and don't feel guilty if it's proving difficult.

Common problems that you may be experiencing (that we have all experienced with our own children in the last few days and weeks) include:

- Outright work refusal.
- Children claiming that the work is 'too hard' because they really want you to sit with them and give them more attention.
- Procrastination and delaying tactics.
- Tantrums.

These problems can be compounded by:

- Pressure from our own employers to meet deadlines which mean that we literally don't have time to sit and look at school work with our kids.
- The fact the National Curriculum is so much harder than it used to be and Primary aged children need to tackle objectives that were formerly on the Secondary curriculum and/or current teaching methods are different to the ones we studied at a school.
- The sheer need to just have a break!

So with this in mind, we would like to share some more resources, pointers, tips and realistic expectations that we've found helpful:

1. Expect no more than a maximum of three hours 'educational' activity per day (scaled to an hour a day for younger children). Don't worry if some days your children engage with more structured activity than others.

2. Make use of educational resources that we and others provide and go with the things your children show an interest in, which could include:

- a. Work that we provide via the school website class pages or Tapestry including: literacy, maths, science and the wider curriculum.
- b. BBC's new online daily lesson resource, Bitesize (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize>) which provides age appropriate lessons and activities for all year groups.

3. Make use of video led activities if you have access to these. Joe Wicks is great and there are several alternatives that provide a physical activity, including our own Amy Dazzle Dance or such as Oti Mabuse's Facebook dance classes each day at 11.30am.

4. Consider asking children to engage in alternate activities that will reinforce key skills but that will also occupy them for a while. Traditional board games can be great for this:

- Scrabble, Boggle or other word games will reinforce spelling.
- Strategy games like noughts and crosses, draughts, chess, battleships and connect four.

Be realistic about what you can do

- **You're not expected to become teachers** and your children aren't expected to learn as they do in school. Simply **providing your children with some structure** at home will help them to adapt. Use the tips below to help you make this work for your household.
- **Experiment** in the first week, then **take stock**. What's working and what isn't? Ask your children, involve them too.
- **Share the load if there are 2 parents at home**. Split the day into 2-3 hour slots and take turns so you can do your own work.
- **Take care of your own health and wellbeing**. This will be new for your entire household, so give it time to settle. Take a look at the links at the end of this factsheet for some advice on mental health and wellbeing

Keep to a timetable wherever possible

- **Create and stick to a routine** if you can. This is what children are used to. For example, eat breakfast at the same time and make sure they're dressed before starting the 'school' day – avoid staying in pyjamas!
- **Involve your children in setting the timetable** where possible. It's a great opportunity for them to manage their own time better and it'll give them ownership.
- **Check in with your children and try to keep to the timetable, but be flexible**. If a task/activity is going well or they want more time, let it extend where possible.
- If you have more than 1 child at home, **consider combining their timetables**. For example, they might exercise and do maths together – see what works for your household.
- **Designate a working space if possible**, and at the end of the day have a clear cut-off to signal school time is over.
- **Stick the timetable up on the wall** so everyone knows what they should be doing when, and tick activities off throughout the day.
- **Distinguish between weekdays and weekends**, to separate school life and home life.

Make time for exercise and breaks throughout the day

- **Start each morning with a [PE lesson](#)** at 9am with Joe Wicks or an alternative as listed above.
- If you have a **garden, use it regularly**. If you don't, try to get out **once a day** as permitted by the government (households can be together outdoors but 2 metres apart from others).

Other activities to keep children engaged throughout the day

- Get your children to **write postcards** to their grandparents or to pen pals.
- Ask **grandparents to listen to your children read** on FaceTime (or ask grandparents to read to younger children).
- **Give them chores** to do so they feel more responsible about the daily routine at home.
- Ask them to **help you cook** and bake.
- Accept that **they'll probably watch more TV/spend time on their phone** – that's ok but you might want to set/agree some screen time limits.

Mental Health and Wellbeing Support

Like everyone, there will be times when you may feel the strain in your household. There could be times when adults or children need some extra emotional support and we hope that some of the resources we have shared have been of some use. One more website has been launched called CAMHS Resources (<https://www.camhs-resources.co.uk>) that we highly recommend if you need it. The site was created for young people, carers and professionals to pool together lots of helpful resources from across the internet that are available to help support your mental health and well-being and is well worth a look.

Stay safe and sane in these challenging times.

Hope to see you soon

Walkley Primary School Safeguarding Team