

Dear Parents,

Please find below some updated information which I hope will help you and your children at this time. I will communicate with you next week, and, in the meantime, I hope you all keep well. The weather this week has been a blessing, though it is set to turn colder at the weekend, so outdoor time may become more limited. I would still recommend that the children do spend part of each day in the garden when possible, as this is so important for their mental well-being.

How to support your child during the time they are learning at home

This guidance will help you to create a positive learning environment for your child and yourselves.

Be realistic about what you can do:

- Remember you are not expected to become teachers and your children are not expected to learn as they do in school.
- 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 this 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 slots and take turns so you can do your own work and have personal time.
- Take care of your own health and wellbeing. This will be new for your entire household, so give it time to settle. Do 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! We suggested a timetable in a previous communication.
- Involve your children in setting the timetable where possible. It's a great opportunity for them to manage their own time better and it will 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 and they want more time, let it extend where possible.
- If you have more than 1 child at home, combine 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 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. This helps with a sense of community.
- 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).
- Get your children to write in a diary what they did each day – this can be a clear sign that the 'school' day has ended.

Other activities to keep children engaged throughout the day:

- Where you have more freedom in your timetable, make time for other activities. Add some creative time or watch a dance video from Go Noodle to get the heart-rate going.
- Get your children to write postcards to their grandparents or to pen pals.
- If possible, ask grandparents to listen to your children read on FaceTime (or ask grandparents to read to younger children). This helps the family to stay in touch.
- Give the children appropriate 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 should set/agree some screen time limits.
- We have already posted some websites on a new page under the parent tab on the website, and will continue to add to these over the coming days.

If you need to contact the school in case of emergency, a member of the leadership team (myself, Mrs White and Mrs Hamper) is usually on site at least between 8:30am and 9:00am on normal working days over the next weeks (including during the Easter holidays as far we know). If we are caring for children to support our key workers, then we are on site until 4:00pm. This may change dependent on health grounds, on need and on Government advice.

All children will be feeling unsettled at this time, but the anxiety levels for those children with ASD or a learning difficulty may be much higher. Cardiff and Vale University Health Board in conjunction with other colleagues have produced a helpful document which may support all parents with ideas. http://www.cardiffandvaleuhb.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/documents/1143/Supporting_Children_with_LD_&_ASD_with_COVID_Isolation.pdf

Please do all take a moment to look at this as it has some great ideas of activities everyone could do with their children. (Obviously the contact details in the document do not apply to our locality.)

Guidance on supporting your mental health and that of your children:

- [Coronavirus and your wellbeing](#) – Mind.org
- [Supporting young people's mental health during this period](#) – Anna Freud Centre