

St. John's Upper Holloway C.E. Primary School

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Dear Parents and Carers,

After a week of school closure to all but the children of key workers, I am writing to send you my best wishes and hope that you and your children are managing to cope during these very uncertain times. Some of you may be coping well with the enforced family time but I do understand that this is a very stressful time for everyone.

On that note, I would like to clarify the school's position on the home learning work that is being set for your children, and hopefully, offer you some reassurance.

- ❖ Please try not to become overwhelmed by the work that has been set or feel under pressure that your child has to complete everything that has been provided by their class teacher. What you are now providing at home does not amount to home schooling and we do not expect you to fulfil the roles of class teachers. Your child is simply engaged in 'distance learning' and the hope is that they do the activities provided as it keeps them busy and provides them and you with a daily structure. There will be a certain amount of 'catching up' for all children when schools return to normal and we can address this then.
- ❖ There is nothing to feel guilty about if your child does not want to engage with anything set by their teacher. You have the choice to provide your child with other learning-based activities at home (see some suggestions below) which will be valuable learning too. We are also mindful that many of you may be working from home and have more than one child, so will have your hands full.
- ❖ We are experiencing an unprecedented emergency situation that is adversely impacting on everyone so it is very important that we all have a sense of perspective regarding home learning.

Taking all the above into account, we would still like your child to be able to access home learning as much as they are able. Although the home learning packs this week consisted of activity sheets, from next week onwards we will be sending parents the information they need via Parentmail and also be posting the information on the class page of the school website (www.stjohnsupperholloway.co.uk/curriculum-and-assessment).

The feedback we received from parents this week was that the amount of work set was more than most children could complete, particularly if parents are busy working from home or doing other tasks. We are therefore simplifying it so that children read each day and record something in their reading record book, spend 30-45 minutes on the online maths programmes such as Doodle maths or Mymaths and also do some writing over the week (it may be a longer task over the 5 days or some shorter tasks). Teachers will also be setting an RE task linked to the Easter story plus a couple of other activities linked to science, humanities or the arts. Next week, the Mad Science team are doing live webcams at 11am each Monday, Wednesday and Friday so this could be your child's science for the week! The timetable for your child is just a suggestion and as I said above, please do not worry if your child cannot complete all of it.



Here are some other ideas you may find useful:

- ❖ Keeping physically active is really important if you are stuck at home. There are a number of free sites you can access that will help your child burn off their excess energy! These include Joe Wicks kids workout and simple high energy dance routines with Oti Mabuse, both of which can be found easily on google or you tube.
- ❖ Playing and developing their fine motor skills – for example doing Lego, cutting, making playdough shapes and cooking.
- ❖ Art – for example sketching, making collages, drawing portraits of the family.
- ❖ Music – make your own shakers and sing songs together.
- ❖ Working independently on a project e.g: researching from a book or online, and putting together something to present to you or your family. This is better for older children.
- ❖ For younger children, where possible, provide lots of imaginative free play, the more independent the better.

Teachers will be supporting as much as they can and will be keeping an eye on how their children are coping with any online activities. They will be using the blog on Purple Mash as well as emails and phone calls to ensure everything is OK and to offer help and support as needed. As many of the resources are online and need a log-in with password, please don't hesitate to contact us if they don't seem to work or you have forgotten them.

Finally, rest assured, you are doing enough, so please do not let a lack of work or a limited focus from your child give you cause for concern. Fundamentally, you are supporting your child through the most challenging of times. It is therefore hugely important that you also look after yourselves and your own health and mental wellbeing.

When life for us all gets back to normal, we will ensure that learning throughout the school gets back on track to where it needs to be and that your child will quickly catch-up with the key concepts that need to have been taught for their age.

Do continue to take care of yourselves and each other. Don't forget the office can still be contacted on 0207 272 2780 between 9am and 3pm Monday, although we anticipate we will not be open during the Easter holiday period.

Best wishes

Brian Welsh
Headteacher

