

30<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Many people are feeling stressed, overwhelmed and under pressure by everything that is happening. This includes the work being sent home for your child. I wanted to try to answer some of your concerns

A few points to note first:

- 1) This is not home-schooling. This is an unprecedented emergency situation impacting on the whole world. Home-schooling is a choice, where you considered, you plan for it and you are your child's school teacher in whatever form you choose. This is, at best, distance learning.
- 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) It is not possible to facilitate distance learning with a primary aged child and work from home at the same time. If you are trying to do that, stop now. You can certainly have activities where your child learns, but your focus is your job, and keeping sane!

So, a few FAQs:

*My school has sent home lots of physical work. Pages and pages, hours and hours. How am I supposed to get through it all?*

You are not please do not try to. Your child's teacher wants to make sure there is a good range of activities that you can do with your child, if you are able to. Teachers will not be sending work out over the Easter holidays, so you may want to save some of the activities until then.

*Someone in my child's class has everything done and we have barely started. Will they fall behind?*

Even if everything were equal in terms of support, time and number of children all children learn at different rates. In the class there is a wide range of levels in all subjects, there is different paces and there are many children working on differentiated levels of work.

When the children return to us we will pick up from where they are and continue to support their learning journey from wherever they are.

*I am not doing any work with my kids. All they are 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 three different children of different ages?*

You cannot, stop trying. If they are 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 is the bare minimum you would expect?*

Reading every day (independent or to them or audiobook etc.)

Some free writing. If they will keep a diary or something, great. If not, would they draw a comic?

Practical hands on maths. Be that cooking, cleaning, outside or some maths games, physical or digital.

Some time on the iPad or games consoles is fine, as long as that is not all they are doing.

Some fine motor work. Lego, cutting, playdough, tidying up small toys.

Physical exercise everyday

Some art/music where possible through the week.

If your child is old enough getting them to independently work on a project is great for keeping brains ticking over. Get them researching 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

Finally,

There are lots and lots of ideas and activities out there on Facebook and other social media sites. It is impossible to do all of them, pick the ones you think look fun and are easy to manage.

You are doing enough. You are loving your children and supporting them through a difficult time. Look after yourself. Minimising stress is vital in a time like this for mental health. Do not let this be something that stresses you. Only you can control that by accepting it is in your circle of control, you are the primary educator and this is all your call.

We are here to help in whatever way we can.

Kind Regards

Pauline Turner