



Dear Parents and Carers,

Lots of people are feeling stressed, overwhelmed and under pressure by everything that's happening. This includes the work being sent home for your child. We wanted to just give our perspective on it all as a school and we hope this can help with that somewhat.

A few points to note first:

1) This is not home-schooling. This is an unprecedented emergency situation impacting on the whole world. Let's keep perspective. Home-schooling is a choice, where you consider and plan for it and you are your child's school teacher in whatever form you choose. The current situation is, at best, distance learning. In reality, none of us know what we're doing and what's right and wrong here.

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 garden, 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 are just doing the best they can as well. They 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 your own and your family's health and well being. Again, these are unprecedented circumstances. You don't need to be superheroes.

A few FAQs:

- My school has sent home lots of paper based work. How am I supposed to get through it all?!

You're not. Schools had little warning that they would be closed. We had very little time to gather things to send home and there aren't a lot of complaints that enough didn't go home. It's not a competition, or a race. The resources are there to help you and your child, rather than being a prescriptive curriculum.

- My school keeps sending home links and emails with more work. How do I make it stop?

See above. These are suggestions and ideas because we want to ensure that we offer enough work for the children to do and to keep their brains active and stimulated.

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

Even if everything were equal in terms of support, time and number of children (which it's not) all children learn at different rates. Your child will not fall behind. This is all revision and reminder work. If children could all learn new concepts without specific teaching, we wouldn't need teachers. They will cover all of this again, multiple times.

- I'm not doing any work with my children. All they're doing is building Lego, cooking and playing outside.

All of this is learning - very valuable learning although the home-learning packs and online resources are there to support your child's learning too.

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

You can't, stop trying. You try to do one activity with each child while the others play and then swap over. 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 baking or some craft activities.

-Our ideal for the children in our school?

- A bit of reading every day (independent or to them or via audiobook etc)

- 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
- Stretch goal, if 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, if you can join in sometimes that's great.
- **Lots and lots of talking and communication. Put down the phones and tablets for a while and play a game or do a jigsaw together. Look at old photos and talk about memories. Share your favourite songs or rhymes from when you were young. Play word games like I-spy or 20 questions.**

Most importantly, you are doing enough. You are loving your kids and supporting them through a difficult time. Look after yourself. Minimising stress is absolutely vital in a time like this for mental health. Don't 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.