

Dear Parents

In these uncertain times when children may be required to stay at home for substantial periods of time or schools may be required to close, we want to try to help our families as best as we can.



Daily Learning Programme

Our advice is to try to use the outline of a school day as the framework and stick as much as possible to what had been your child's routine. There are some tips on the next page that might be useful to support timetabling. Included is a table of Suggested Daily and Weekly Activities. We are certainly not expecting children to do every activity, every day but we wanted to give parents an idea of what the key focus areas are and some ideas of what children can do. These are by no means exhaustive lists and I am sure families can also think of other engaging ways to reinforce the learning.

Resources

This book is designed to support children and parents while they are unable to attend school. Of course, it is up to families how they use this resource and we certainly wouldn't expect children who are poorly to be working on their school work but it may help to structure the days when children are well and help to keep their learning in focus. We are also ordering published workbooks for all pupils.



Online Tools

Teachers will also be posting worksheets, useful links, PowerPoints and possibly even an occasional recorded message to their classes via their class page on **Class Dojo**. **Class Dojo** will be the primary means of communication between home and class teachers. There is a portfolio section of the website where children can save photos of work, file attachments etc. for their teachers to look at and of course parents and pupils can direct message teachers through this application too.

Hedgehogs Class please upload work and photographs to **Tapestry**.

The following websites will be the main places to go for extra practice and resources:

- <https://www.curriculumvisions.com/> User name: unityFens Password: trialDemonstration
- <https://play.ttrockstars.com/>

We are also working on developing a Google Classroom and will contact families with additional details of this through Class Dojo. Please note children should only use the internet with permission of the supervising adult.

If you do not have the technology at home for children to access the internet, please speak to your child's class teacher so they can try to organise an alternative means of support.

Well-being

As always, the well-being of our families is our main priority and regular communication is vital for this. For this reason, we ask that every day your child is off school, you call or email the school office. In the event of a school closure we would like you to check in on Class Dojo. Equally, the school will also try to call to see how everyone is doing and if there is anything we can do to help.



Kind regards

H Bartley

Tips to Help Structure the Time

Playtime

Break the day into small chunks much like school does with subjects. If possible, add in two to three break times for your child to explore outside. Remember that play time is a part of school life and kids are used to a little cold and a little rain. While there is no official guidance on how much time to spend outside these days, it is important to let the kids run around there.

Outdoor time has lots of benefits for kids – and a key one for you: If they burn off steam, they may be more tired and willing to go to sleep at night.



Dedicate time for play

Map out time for dedicated child-led play or playing together as well as school work. When a child is imagining, creating, building, strategising or inventing, they are doing some serious learning. This is the perfect time to reinforce maths skills playing Monopoly, spelling through Scrabble or tactics through Chess. Have a few 15- to 30-minute blocks (more or less time depending on your child's age and play development) of dedicated child-led play. The more a child plays, the more they learn to play.



A few tips for effective playtime:

Move the “open-ended toys” to the front: Toys with lights and batteries that sing and talk won't hook your child into play as well as simple toys (think toys from your childhood – blocks, cars, dolls, kitchens...). Limit adult involvement: play is the child's job, not the adults. Accept some play invitations, but don't feel guilty about skipping others. Kids need to play independent of adults.

While you can just put out toys for unstructured free play, kids also get excited when parents facilitate some of the fun. Think of activities as “invitations to play.” Easy indoor activities can be a lifeline, a great way to practice school skills and a way to quietly entertain kids. These activities do not need to be complicated or take hours to set up. As you plan your schedule, think of places where an activity might be helpful to transition from one time block to the next, like after snack time or before dinner. Example ideas:

- **Trash Art** – Find some recycled materials and let your kids paint them. Kids love painting random objects and making beautiful creations from them.
- **Sticky Match-Up** – Draw shapes, letters, numbers, words or math problems on sticky notes and hide them around the house for your child to find. Then have the child match them up on a “key” that hangs on the wall.

Build in reading

Study after study shows the importance of reading to kids. Being home all day is a great chance to increase that habit.

Put in reading blocks. Fifteen to 20 minutes a day is a great place to start for the younger children (remember, it doesn't have to be all at once. Break it apart). Consider structuring this reading block in a few different ways: parent reads aloud, child reads aloud (if the child can read), and family silent reading time. And if your child wants to extend a reading period, don't worry too much about messing up the schedule. There's no such thing as too much reading!



Make a screen time routine

Use screens wisely, as a parenting tool. To keep your kids from “over-indulging” on screens:



- Make screen time predictable: have a set time in the schedule so children know when to expect screen time, for how long and be specific about the purpose.
- Turn it off: Follow through when the scheduled time for screens is over, and don't leave TV on as background noise. If the house feels too quiet, turn on some music instead.
- Outside of the scheduled time block, only use screens *when you (the parent) chooses it because you need it*. Save screens for big moments, like when you have a conference call or just need some peace and quiet!
- Of course even with the most perfectly planned schedule, you will still have days when you just can't muster the energy to come up with even the simplest activity and instead let them watch another episode of their favourite show. That's okay too. Do what you need to do to get through that day. You'll have your routine to go back to the next day. And the one after that, too.