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Friday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2020

Dear Parents,

I hope you all had a good Easter 'break' albeit a bit different this year.

As you will have seen, the teachers have resumed posting activities this week, which so many of you have been engaging with. It is great for the teachers to receive responses – it also gives us a little reassurance that all is well with the children, from a safeguarding perspective.

In terms of the activities uploaded by the staff, we are aware that every child is different; some will enjoy some of the activities and some will get less out of them. You might do the same activity on two different days and get two entirely different outcomes dependent on the mood of your child, so don't give up if the first time doesn't work. Equally, you may choose to skip some activities in favour of something that you feel might work better for your child.

You may have noticed a shift in the types of activities suggested by the teachers to more practical pursuits, which can often be completed outdoors. We are mindful of the amount of screen time that children may have. As I have said in previous letters, you know your child and I am confident you can judge how much or how little to do. The government have issued advice to parents about home learning, which I have attached at the end of this letter. It is only *advice* and is not statutory!

You may have read in the news that schools are being gifted devices to help with educating children at home. This currently only applies to secondary aged pupils. We believe that most families are managing to access the online content successfully and where there have been problems, we have worked with parents to help with equipment and connectivity. If you do require support or equipment, then please do contact us via [enquiries@longstone.derbyshire.sch.uk](mailto:enquiries@longstone.derbyshire.sch.uk) as we may be able to offer a solution to help.

Having heard last week's briefing which stated a shutdown for a further 3 weeks, we know that this situation will continue for at least the next two weeks; beyond this, I only know as much as you! While this continues, please do feel free to contact the school office or your child's teacher should you be worried about anything. We may not have the answer but we can certainly try to support you and your families wherever we can.

All the very best and stay safe,

Mrs G. Harvey

# Help primary school children continue their education during coronavirus (COVID-19)

## Structuring the day

Do not worry about trying to maintain a full routine for your child like they had at school. But children will feel more comfortable and learn better with a predictable routine to the day, even if this is difficult.

When schools provide children with work they may give you advice on how to structure the day. But generally, you should try to make sure that they:

- get up and go to bed at the same time each day
- have regular meal times
- have regular breaks
- make time to be active - children are used to regular play at lunch and break times

## Using digital devices

Your child's school may set them work that can be done on a digital device such as a laptop, desktop, tablet or smartphone.

Set age-appropriate parental controls on any devices your child is using and supervise their use of websites and apps. See [advice on keeping them safe online](#) and talk to your child about online safety.

## Reducing screen time

Digital devices are not the only way to learn. Manage screen time with a timer and break up screen time by getting your child to:

- use books and other printed materials that their school has provided or that you have at home
- write by hand – try asking them to complete work by hand, write a diary, a summary of things they have learned or done each day or 'to do' lists
- be active and get away from the screen regularly – see a selection of [physical activity resources](#) for primary school children
- stop using digital devices at least an hour before bed

## Reception, year 1 and year 2 children

The best way to help children aged 4 to 7 learn is to:

- sit with them as they work
- do active and practical things, rather than trying to make them sit and listen for long periods
- try to break down the work into shorter periods, based on how long they can concentrate
- take frequent breaks
- praise or reward them when they do well

## Talking

Talk with your child throughout the day and try to explain new words. For example, discuss everything you are doing and pick out words that might be new to them.

## Reading together

When you read with your child try to:

- express the emotion in the story
- give colour to the characters using voices, tone and pace
- discuss the things you are reading

You can make a story more interesting and help your child develop their understanding of a book by linking what you are reading to their life. For example, while reading about Cinderella going to the ball, talk about how a ball is similar to a birthday party.

Ask your child questions about what you are reading as you go. For example:

- ask some questions that only need a short answer, such as what colour something is, or the name of a character
- ask some questions that need a longer answer, such as how a character is feeling
- ask them to tell you what has happened in the story so far

Libraries are currently closed, but you can find digital services they are providing at [Libraries Connected](#).

### **Phonics**

Phonics is a method schools use to teach children how to read quickly and skilfully.

Contact your school, which will be working on ways to help you with this. Try to sit with your child and practise with them, following the advice you get from their school.

### **Writing**

Try to help children to continue to practise their writing. This may include the formation of letters and familiarity with pens and pencils for younger children, or practising creative writing for older children.

Ask children to write about their day-to-day experiences of being at home, or to write letters to send to family members.

### **Numbers**

Practise counting and numbers. This does not always have to be a planned activity. For example, count things around the house while you are doing other things like cooking or cleaning.

For older children learning sums, ask your school for help or see a [list of resources to help with maths](#) recommended by teachers and school leaders.

### **Year 3 to 6 children**

The best way to help children aged 7 to 11 learn is to:

- give them support and direction, but encourage them to do work independently too
- include active and practical things, rather than trying to make them sit and work for long periods
- try to break down the work into shorter periods, based on how long they can concentrate
- take frequent breaks
- praise or reward them when they do well

To check if they are learning try to:

- ask them questions as they go
- talk about things they learned

### **Talking**

Ask children to talk through what they have learned during the day and find time to talk with them more generally.

### **Reading**

Talk to your child about what they are reading. This will help them understand what they have read and encourage them to read for fun.

Ask your child questions about what they are reading. For example:

- ask questions that make them think about the story, such as how a character is feeling
- ask them to tell you what has happened in the story so far

Libraries are currently closed, however, you can find digital services they are providing at [Libraries Connected](#).

### **Writing**

Try to help children practise their writing. Work from school may be sent digitally, but using pen and paper will help children be ready for when they go back to school.

### **Information for parents of year 6 children**

Year 6 children (aged 10 to 11) should continue doing any work set for them by their school.

To prepare for going to secondary school this can be a good time for them to follow their own interests. For example, for:

- history, by visiting the [English Heritage](#) website to explore England's history
- geography, by researching other countries
- science, by finding out more about the human body on [BBC Bitesize](#)
- art, by trying the activities on [TATE Kids](#)