

Dear Parents,

I hope you are all keeping well and looking after each other. School remains open to children of Keyworkers and we are adapting to our new normal.

Thank you for all your continued messages of appreciation. I understand that home learning is different in every household and every child (and their circumstances) is unique.

This is i think a useful set of guidelines, please remember they are not must dos but may help you with structure and routine. Also don't attempt to do all these things at once - pace yourself, this sadly is a marathon not a sprint.

How to support home learning guidance:

Be realistic about what you can do

- You're not expected to become teachers and your children aren't expected to learn as they do in school. Simply providing your children with some structure at home will help them to adapt. Use the tips below to help you make this work for your household.
- Experiment in the first weeks then take stock. What's working and what isn't? Ask your children, involve them too.
- Share the load if there are 2 parents at home. Split the day into 1-2 hour slots and take turns so you can do your own work.
- Take care of your own health and wellbeing. This will be new for your entire household, so give it time to settle. Take a look at the links at the end of this factsheet for some advice on mental health and wellbeing.

Keep to a timetable wherever possible

- Create and stick to a routine if you can. This is what children are used to. For example, eat breakfast at the same time and make sure they're dressed before starting the 'school' day - avoid staying in pyjamas!
- Involve your children in setting the timetable where possible. It's a great opportunity for them to manage their own time better and it'll give them ownership.
- Check in with your children and try to keep to the timetable, but be flexible. If a task/activity is going well or they want more time, let it extend where possible.
- If you have more than 1 child at home, consider combining their timetables. For example, they might exercise and do maths together - see what works for your household.
- Designate a working space if possible, and at the end of the day have a clear cut-off to signal school time is over.
- Stick the timetable up on the wall so everyone knows what they should be doing when, and tick activities off throughout the day.
- Distinguish between weekdays and weekends, to separate school life and home life.

Make time for exercise and breaks throughout the day

- Start each morning with a PE lesson at 9am with Joe Wicks.
- If you have a garden, use it regularly. If you don't, try to get out once a day as permitted by the government (households can be together outdoors but 2 metres apart from others)
- Get your children to write in a diary what they did each day - this can be a clear sign that the 'school' day has ended.

Other activities to keep children engaged throughout the day

- Where you have more freedom in the timetable, make time for other activities. Add some creative time or watch a dance video from Go Noodle to get the heart-rate going.
- Get your children to write postcards to their grandparents or to pen pals.
- Ask grandparents to listen to your children read on FaceTime (or ask grandparents to read to younger children)
- Give them chores to do so they feel more responsible about the daily routine at home
- Ask them to help you cook and bake.
- Accept that they'll probably watch more TV/ spend time on their phone - that's ok but you might want to set/agree some screen time limits.

See guidance on supporting your mental health and that of your children:

- [Coronavirus and your wellbeing](#) - Mind.org
- [Supporting young people's mental health during this period](#) - Anna Freud Centre

Finally remember to stay strong - you are a part of our St Mary's family - you are never alone.

God Bless

Julia Pearce

Head Teacher