



**EAST BRIDGFORD ST. PETER'S
CHURCH OF ENGLAND ACADEMY**

'TOGETHER IN ACHIEVEMENT'

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Message from the Head Teacher

Dear Parents and Carers,

Firstly, well done for getting through your first week since school closure. Thank you so much for all the many well wishes, thoughts and prayers sent in via email, thank you cards and in person (from 2m away).

Lots of people are feeling strained, overwhelmed and under pressure by everything that's happening. This may include the paper activity packs and signposted links sent home for your child. I wanted to just give my perspective on it all as a Head Teacher alongside many other Head Teachers' views and I hope this can help with reassurance in regards to your child's education.

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 considered, you plan for it and you are your child's school teacher in whatever form you choose. This is, at best, distance learning. In reality, it's everyone doing their best and pulling together, because none of us know how long this is for 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 or signposted 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) Currently, schools are responding to government guidance, like everyone. 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. 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 well-being of you and your family.

So, a few FAQs:

- How am I supposed to get the pages of work sent home done with my child?

You're not. Your child's teacher spent a couple of hours at very short notice gathering things to send home so they could say they did their best. It's not a competition, or a race, it's unlikely the teacher will even manage to look at all of it.

- There are lots of signposted learning links to choose from, should we be doing these if so which ones?

See above. These are suggestions and ideas. Use them if they suit you, don't if they don't suit. Other links are coming out all the time.

- I've heard some children are doing lots of work already 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. In the class there's a wide range of levels in all subjects, there's different paces and there are many children working on differentiated levels of work. It's almost impossible for teachers to differentiate at the moment, so you don't have to do it either. Your child will not fall behind. 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.

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

You can't. 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 free writing, baking etc.

Our ideal for the children in St Peter's Academy?

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

- Some free writing now and then. If they'll keep a diary or something, great. If not, would they draw a comic? If your child still has their '*Just Write*' book then just write (this is an empty exercise book, any spare exercise book can be used for this).

- 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 'Take Care' 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.

Ultimately, you are doing enough. You are loving your children and supporting them through a difficult time. As our school prayer says: *Help us to Take Care of ourselves, each other, the world and with our work.* 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 choice.

Our children are watching us and learning about how we respond to stress and uncertainty. Let's educate our children for resilience.

Regards,



Mr Tomlinson