



OXFORD DIOCESAN
BOARD OF EDUCATION

NORTH LEIGH C E PRIMARY SCHOOL



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Dear Parents and Carers

I can hardly believe that it is only just over a week since we closed school; such a lot seems to have changed for us all since then. I do hope that this letter finds you and your loved ones safe and well.

As you will appreciate, the move to close schools happened with very little notice, leaving staff with a limited amount of time to organize emergency arrangements for the care of children of key workers or put together home learning resources for all our other families. It now seems appropriate, as school will be closed for some considerable length of time, to establish more regular and systematic routines around home learning resources.

Home Learning - Expectations

Firstly, we would like to emphasise that we are mindful of the pressures on families in the current circumstances and that supporting children's home learning is only one among many things you are having to manage. For example, some families will have parents and carers who are trying to support home learning while simultaneously working from home and/or supporting vulnerable relatives. Others will have children who need to share devices both with siblings and working parents. I have recently given a wry smile to the 'perfect' examples of home-schooling that the population are currently posting on social media and wonder how long such apparent levels of enthusiasm and intensity can be maintained and the frustrations that will be faced by parents and children as overly high expectations are not met.

With this in mind, though we recognize that a sense of routine in our approach to home learning can be supportive of what goes on at home, we are also aware that there needs to be some flexibility around expectations of what children (and you!) can realistically achieve. Home learning, like homework, will be approached differently by different families. Equally, whatever we put in place needs to be sustainable over time for our teaching staff, who are also providing emergency care in school as well managing their own health, children or vulnerable relatives at home, along with the rest of the population. We think it would be more helpful to look on this period as a marathon rather than a sprint.

Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health

We would like to reassure parents that once children return to school it will be relatively easy to pick up academic learning from wherever children left off and that experience shows that they are very able to make accelerated progress after an enforced break in learning. However, it will be less easy for us to deal with the emotional challenges faced by children in the current crisis when we return en masse to school. For this reason, we are asking you to be very aware of children's emotional state over the coming weeks.

For many children, spending quality time with you and their siblings in normal and familiar activity - sharing a book, watching a film, baking together, building a camp in the garden, planting seeds - will all be of much greater importance in the long run than practicing spellings or times-tables and you should not feel guilty in indulging them.

We recently came across some very useful guidance in school about supporting children in understanding the current crisis and so I have attached it to this letter. You may also find the following links helpful if looking for emotional or mental health support.

<https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/media/1960/coronavirus-mental-health-and-wellbeing-resources.pdf>

Home Learning - Routines

With all this in mind, we have now agreed that home learning activities will be updated weekly on Class Pages of the website under the Homework Tab. This will be in the format of a suggested daily 'timetable' covering essential learning and practice, with links to online resources to help you with these. There will then be further suggestions of activities you might like to try. Timings for each activity are approximate and you can choose to do them in any order throughout the day as fits with your own schedules. Short bursts of regular practice are key to success in reading, spelling and maths.

The first week's work will be posted today and subsequent updates will be posted in time for access on a Monday morning. We will continue to post work over the Easter break, but please feel free to focus on family time or following children's own interests if this is more appropriate.

Home School Communication

We are also seeking ways to ensure teachers, children and classmates stay in touch over the closure period, so are introducing a weekly children's newsletter and will be putting in place some interactive activities and competitions online too. In the meantime, KS2 children should already be submitting and sharing book reviews online.

Finally, we would like to reassure you that we will continue to do whatever we can to support you as we move through the current crisis. As this is obviously an unknown state of affairs for all of us, our approaches to home learning are likely to continue to evolve over the coming weeks. Some ideas will work effectively and some will need to be re-evaluated; we ask for your support and understanding

during this process. Now we are up and running, we will review our provision and attempt to enrich and improve it as much as possible, within the obvious constraints of staffing levels and technology.

Teachers will be contacting parents this week to check how things are going at home and to establish clear lines of communication going forwards. However, please remember that personalised contact with pupils and marking will not be possible in the same way as usual.

A Note on Internet Safety

We are aware that providing home learning via our school website and web links means that your child may be accessing the internet more than is usual and they may well be using other technology to stay in touch remotely with friends and relatives. Please ensure that you are supervising their use of such platforms and refer to the school website for more resources on internet safety:

<https://www.northleighprimaryschool.org.uk/parentInformationEsafety.php>

Should you have any concerns about issues raised around internet safety, then please do get in touch via the school office.

We understand that the coming weeks are likely to be a very challenging time for us all. As a school, we want to be able to support all members of our community; our children, our families and our staff, in any way we can, as we all navigate the uncharted waters that lie ahead. If you feel we can assist you or sign post you to help in any way then please email the school office: office.3128@northleigh.oxon.sch.uk and we will endeavor to respond as soon as we can. **Should you require urgent assistance or need to contact us in an emergency, then please use this number 07464 395842 (leaving a message if necessary) and we will speak to you as soon as is possible.**

All best wishes; we are holding you all in our thoughts and hearts until we are back together.

Yours sincerely

Deborah Seccull
Headteacher

Sophie Warner
Chair of Governors

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