

Water Primary School

Happiness, Health & Opportunity

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Dear Parent/Guardian,

I thought I would share with you this recent letter from a Headteacher to his parents which echoes our thoughts regarding Home Learning and the unwanted anxiety this may cause to parents.

Lots of people are feeling stressed, overwhelmed and under pressure by everything that's happening. This includes the work being sent home for your child

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.*
- 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 and is going to spend the entire period playing in the dirt, or baking, or watching TV, then that is your choice. That is your right. There is nothing to stress or feel guilty about.*
- 3) Schools don't know what they're doing either. 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. The very idea is nonsense. 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 survival. Again, unprecedented. Stop trying to be superheroes.*

So, a few FAQs:

My school has sent home lots of physical work. Pages and pages, hours and hours. How am I supposed to get through it all?!

You're not, don't try.

My school keeps sending home links and emails with more work. How do I make it stop? Ahhhhhh!

See above. These are suggestions and ideas because the school is worried they're not offering enough. Use them if they suit you, don't if they don't suit.

Someone in my child's class has everything done 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. This is all revision and reminder work. 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 kids. All they're doing is building Lego, cooking and playing outside.

All of this is learning -very valuable learning. Give yourself and them a break.

How can I get three different lots of work done with 3 different kids of different ages?

You can't, stop trying. 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.

So what's the bare minimum you'd expect?

For me, survival mode. I won't pretend that may be true of all teachers, but you know what?, if they can't have perspective in a time like this then I wouldn't overly worry about their opinion anyway.

My ideal for the children in our school?

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?

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 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.

You are doing enough. You are loving your kids and supporting them through a difficult time. Look after yourself. 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 call.

I hope this post and share will help. It is great to see all the home learning which is happening and I am so proud of all our children and parents but please if you are feeling stressed please don't be. We are all in this together, everything is new to us. All we can do is our best.

Take care and stay safe

Mr Willan
Headteacher



