



Thank you to all of you who have supported your children at home this week. We do know how hard it is, but we also know that it is the best, and safest place for all of us to be. I'm sure, like me, you'd like to send your support and appreciation to all our families and friends working in the NHS at this time.

We still have no idea how long this shut down will last. When we were planning for this, we looked at an initial two week shut down either side of the Easter holidays and planned work that follows on and reinforces what the children have just done at school. We are using this time to investigate various different ways of making work more interactive if we have to continue working remotely for a long time, but we are very aware this depends very much on your own IT skills and hardware at home.

Some parents have asked what to do with completed work; by all means keep it together and bring it back to school when travel restrictions are over. We are trying to make sure that answers are available to you where possible and some of the online work, like that via Purple Mash, can be marked that way.

Please do not stress about completing school work. Bear in mind that, when you are working with your children they are getting 1-1 support, which they rarely get at school! No child would cope with intense 1-1 support all day everyday, so if you've done 20-30mins, that's fine- let them do something else! There's a lot of great ideas (and some not so great...) on Twitter and facebook, but this from another school seem pretty good:

Next – We don't expect you to become teachers. Most of us have been teaching for decades and still don't know what the subjunctive verb form is or the difference between Phase 2 and Phase 3 phonics – it's a minefield! It's our job to teach that though – not yours!

Here's some tips / suggestions to hopefully help / reassure you:

1. Create a routine – This is what's normal for children at school. They know when breaks are coming. Have breakfast, get dressed and start at the same time each day – it doesn't have to be 9:00 a.m. You have to make sure that it works for you and your family.
2. Create the timetable together as a family and display it so everybody knows what's happening that day – we usually do English and Maths tasks



in the morning as we find children are more open to these tasks than and that's what's normal for them.

3. Be flexible – if they're really engaged in a task, don't stop them! We sometimes have break and come back to something because they're enjoying it or it took longer than expected.
4. Set up a work space in your home if possible – keep paper, equipment close by and get the children to clear it away when finished. Put a song on to clear up to! We expect classrooms to be tidy and cleared after each session by the children – you should too!
5. Build in exercise opportunities throughout the day – Joe Wicks (if any of you can walk by today!), Just Dance, football in the garden, skipping, get on the trampoline, Oti Mabuse dance or Go Noodle for example.
6. Plan in down time. After dinner in school, we have collective worship or calming time, like reading. We expect the children to be still, relax and calm their minds after the busy lunch time. There are lots of guided meditations for children on YouTube.
7. Plan in reading time every single day – Our children listen to adults reading at some point during the day at St. Oswald's and they love it. You might want to use this as an activity to show that it's the end of your home-learning time. Sharing a book for pleasure, listening to your child read, sitting down yourself with a book whilst your child sits down with their book and reads is essential. Face timing grandparents or another relative to listen to your child read or for them to read or tell your child a story is a great way of getting others involved.
8. Keep a journal / diary – this is history. We will be teaching our children about this in years to come, like we do WW2 and the Great Fire of London. Start a scrap book about what's happening. Take photos, write captions, write letters, do a piece of art work, make a rainbow for your window. These are all great activities to do and to keep for the future.
9. Play with your children – make sure that they lose too! We've noticed that children can struggle to cope with losing a game which is often a root cause of playground fall outs. This is a great opportunity to: dig out the board games; play cards; invent your own games (a good afternoon activity).
10. Give them household chores to do – in school, the children love jobs. Cleaning up and running errands is part of daily life at school. Give them



responsibilities at home – you’re giving them life skills! Take some pressure off yourselves and create some mini “Hinchers.” Involve them in meal planning and preparing too.

11. Technology at points in the day is absolutely fine – watch Newsround, Horrible Histories, Blue Peter, Deadly 60, Art Ninja for example as well as all of the amazing links that we’ve put on our website to support your child during this time. Building up your child’s vocabulary and general knowledge is great for now.
12. Keep checking our website and Twitter. We’re busy putting “suggestions,” together every day and we’re preparing the reading, writing and maths objectives that your child will have covered so far this year. You may wish to use these objectives to give you some guidance.

And finally, when this is all over, we’d love our children to come back to us and tell us about the fun things they’ve learned about – some with you and some on their own. We want to know about the new skills they’ve discovered they have and the new interests they’ve developed. We’ll be armed and ready to pick up the next phonics phase, long division, fractions and the active and passive voice – all of the boring stuff!

Please remember that staff are available via email every day and, at the moment, we are able to keep the office open between 9.00 and 3.30 so get in touch if we can help at all.

In the meantime; keep safe.

**Stay at home, protect the NHS,
save lives.**