

Be Prepared

Dear Parents and Carers,

In addition to Keeping Calm and Carrying On, I think we do also need to 'Be Prepared' - this is Britain after all!

We need to prepare ourselves for the fact that there is a high likelihood that we are all going to be cooped up at home for far more extensive periods than we are used to – and there is a grave danger that we might just drive each other completely crazy!

On top of the natural anxieties we will be carrying, being thrown out of our natural routines can be very unsettling – and this will affect adults and children alike.

Later I will be in touch to let you know how we are going to support you to support your child's learning at home if necessary. Today, however, I'm going to talk more about the 'shape' of our school day, and how the pace of this helps us keep everyone on an even keel.



Exercise and fresh air

On a normal school day the children never go longer than 1hr 30 without going outside and running around like crazy, and our youngest children are out and about much more than that. They really need this – and it is why we always look so frazzled if it has been raining all day!

Things to think about:

- *What access do you have to outside space at home?*
- *What games/exercise challenges could you set up if there is not a lot of space to run?*
- *If the weather is bad are there Youtube channels or other apps you could use to have a bit of 'family fitness' time?*
- *Even if you are working from home – might it not be good for your mental health and well-being to take a 15 minute break every 1hr 30?*

Brain Breaks

After breaks and lunchtime we have our Brain Breaks. We find it really helps the children make the transition from the wild energy they are releasing outside, to centre themselves and settle to their next activity. The adults find it very helpful too!

We will record these so that you can use them at home if you wish, but I think you will find that the children already know all the routines and could show you themselves.

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Singing

Energetic singing, particularly in a group, floods the body with endorphins – the feel-good chemicals which uplift your mood. We sing every day in school in our acts of worship, and often in our classrooms. I will record some of our favourites so you can sing along if you wish. It really doesn't matter what you sing – but sing it loud and sing it proud and I promise you it will do you some good!

Things to think about:

I know lots of the children will sing along with their favourite movies, and their favourite pop songs– and that is great. But there is also great value in them learning off by heart the simpler more traditional songs and rhymes that are part of our culture

- *How many nursery rhymes do your children know off by heart?*
- *How many action songs do they know?*
- *Could your older children teach the younger ones?*
- *Which online resources might there be to help you?*

BBC Newsround

In the juniors we watch Newsround at the start of every afternoon via i-player. The reports are perfectly pitched for this age group, and we spend time discussing it with them, listening to their ideas about how what they have seen links with anything else they know or have heard, and discussing any questions they have.

In fact the BBC have a wealth of free resources online - and we will be signposting you to them in the coming days.

Things to think about:

- *How many internet enabled devices do you have at home? SMART TV, X-box, Playstation, as well as tablets, mobile phones and laptops/computers*
- *Would you be able to navigate to the BBC site, and to i-player and YouTube on them?*
- *Can you see Class Dojo on any of these devices?*
- *Could you set these up as favourites?*

Intervene Early

All teachers learn at their peril the danger of ignoring the signs that things are starting to 'bubble' with children, and ploughing on regardless! We find that it is much less time consuming to nip things in the bud (even if this means changing tasks early) than to deal with the fall-out if things go really wrong.

Take a break

We do love working with your children – but there are times when they would try the patience of a saint! We need our breaks (and to sometimes do a bit of ranting behind closed doors) and so will you.

The big Question

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Might setting up some 'work-day routines' help you navigate extend time at home?

I am not naive – I do know that for many of us being at home will mean that someone in our household is unwell, and our thoughts and prayers will be with you all. I am also aware of the potential negative impact of isolation and we will be doing everything we can to ensure that lines of communication remain open so that even if you are in 'isolation' you do not feel 'isolated'. Might there be things you could do for each other? As a community and a society we are facing a great challenge – and I believe each and every one of us will have something they can contribute to the greater good. Let's do this together.



Sarah Lewis

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