

William Shrewsbury Primary School

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Dear Parents,

I hope that you are all keeping safe and well and coping during this very difficult time. Although it is lovely to see a few of our key workers' children coming in to school, we are really missing the rest of the children and the 'buzz' of learning but we know that the safest place for your children to be at the moment is at home. I wanted to write to you before we 'break up' for Easter today to just keep you up to date with things.

Firstly, we will only be open in the holidays to children where both parents are absolutely critical to the fight against Covid 19. This will be staffed on a rota by many teachers and teaching assistants who have volunteered to work during their holidays and I would like to thank them for this. We will not be open, however, on Good Friday or Bank Holiday Monday. I know that we are all incredibly grateful to the key workers who are going out and putting themselves at risk to save lives or to make sure that we still have food, medicines and other vital supplies at this time. Many of our parents are also in jobs where they are caring for the elderly and vulnerable. I am sure that you will all want to join me in thanking them all for this.

We understand that these unprecedented times can cause financial and emotional challenges for our families. Please don't struggle on in silence and do ask for help. Below are some links to charities and agencies who could possibly help you:

<http://loveinspirefoundationtrust.org/>

<https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/burton-trent>

<https://youngminds.org.uk>

<https://www.mind.org.uk>

<https://www.burtonymca.org/food-bank/>

For parents whose children are on free school meals, the Government is providing vouchers for term time only. The Central Co-operative Learning Trust has filled the holiday gap by already providing vouchers to cover the Easter holidays. At the time of writing, the status of the Government vouchers is still pending and we are trying to chase this up with the provider.

When the lockdown came, it was a little sooner than we were expecting! Fortunately, our ICT technician, Mr Mohammed, and the class teachers had already been working hard to set up Google Classrooms with the KS2 children and adding activities to our website for KS1.

When they are not in school caring for the few children who are in, the teachers are now planning more activities for the children ready for after the Easter Holidays. Although many teachers will be in school during the break, they will not be setting new work or responding to emails. Over the last few days, though, we have been updating the website and adding new information and links to support you during this time (see our [class pages](#) and [twitter](#)).

For parents who have children with special educational needs, Mrs Elsmore has added a range of activities onto the website. Please click on the word 'learning' on the top tab then select 'SEND'. After that, look down the left hand side of the page and click on '[Home Learning](#)'. Many of these activities would be great for children without special needs too. There is also advice there about how to help children with their emotions at this difficult time.

I know that it may be very challenging trying to complete school activities with your children at home. If you are finding all of this quite stressful, please see the tips, taken from a Headteachers' website, which you might find helpful.

Please remember:

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 consider it, plan for it and you become your child's schoolteacher in whatever form you choose.

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 were clearly told NOT 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. Don't try to be superheroes.

So, a few FAQs:

"My school has sent home lots of paper-work for my kids to do. There's loads. How am I supposed to get through it all?!" You're not. Don't try. Your child's teacher spent a couple of hours in utter panic gathering things to send home and putting things online so they could say they did their best and there wasn't a lot of complaints that enough didn't go home. It's not a competition, or a race, it's unlikely the teacher will even manage to look at it all.

"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 that they're not offering enough. Use them if they suit you, don't if they don't suit. If you're getting stressed, stop opening the emails. No one will know!

"Someone in my child's class has everything done and we've barely started. Will my child fall behind?" Every child is in the same position, so 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.

Although very humorous, I hope that reading these tips helps you to relax and spend some quality family time doing fun things at home. I will be in touch after the holidays.

In the meantime, have a happy and healthy Easter.

Mrs Curtis