

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope that this letter finds you and your family well in these challenging times.

Although the school sites remain open for the children of key workers, the vast majority of children are in isolation and are accessing learning remotely. Firstly, I would like to emphasise that although teachers and support staff are providing a wealth of learning for the children to access, there are no expectations on the quantity to be completed. I understand how difficult it is to balance work/working from home with supporting your children with educational activities. Moreover, there are no expectations that parents and carers home-educate their children, but rather support them as much as logistically possible. This is new territory for us too and I would expect remote learning to evolve and become more efficient and effective over the coming weeks. To enable us to do this we welcome feedback on how we can achieve this by sharing successes and any barriers that you have experienced. Please use the school's admin contact for this.

We aim to provide an element of choice in the tasks set, as we understand that children learn in different ways and are inspired to engage with different learning activities. If you feel that your child is having difficulty accessing the learning, please let us know as we are able to adapt tasks to their specific needs. Please see below for further guidance on supporting children with SEND from Steve Williams, the Federation SENDCo.

Please look out for instructions on how to join in with Classroom Dojo, a vehicle for home and school to remain in contact. This has been trialled in some of our schools to great success and is currently being set up for all six.

With Easter fast approaching, we have been asked by parents/carers if teachers could prepare suggestions for activities that they could do alongside their children. Teachers will be sending out suggestions for you to take part in, if you find it helpful. There are no expectations for any of these to be completed; this has been a pressurised time for all concerned and everyone needs a break to recharge their batteries.

The health and wellbeing of children, families and staff are at the forefront, so please have a look at guidance on the school's website on how to look after each other.

Take care and keep safe.



Phil Whittle

Executive Headteacher

Advice for parents of SEN children

It is safe to say that we are living in uncertain times. We are currently advised to stay at home and, for many of us, educating our children at home is a somewhat new experience. Children with SEN often require teaching to be adapted in order for them to access the curriculum so I thought I would compile some basic tips to help you navigate the days ahead.

- If you are able to do nothing else, focus on the basics: reading, writing and maths.
- Game-based learning helps children to engage in their learning without you needing a teaching degree. Sites like Nessy (reading/spelling), Times Tables Rock Stars, RMEasi-maths are all useful. Sit alongside them to act as a guide and give praise often (praise the effort, not the outcome!).
- A full list of online learning should be available on your school's website.
- Keep sessions short with frequent breaks (these could be quick movement breaks, a game of rock, paper, scissors or eye-spy, etc).
- Build in plenty of repetition and revision (but not necessarily delivered the same way every time).
- It is OK to sometimes scribe for them or let them dictate their work into a device if writing is a struggle.
- Make Maths practical: play 'shops', monopoly, do some baking (if you can buy flour!), etc.
- Project-based work is accessible for all children and creative tasks are really rewarding.
- Watching an episode of Blue Planet or Horrible Histories can help you widen the curriculum without you needing to become an expert on the Victorians – sit with them and talk about what you're watching.
- Stick to a routine (important for a lot of SEN kids especially in the current situation).
- Build in plenty of physical activity during the day. Joe Wicks is presenting a PE lesson every morning at 9am on YouTube. See if you can keep up with your children!
- Think about awarding 'merits' for good effort, independent learning, neat handwriting, not annoying your sister, etc.

Most of all, if you manage to cover some of the basics every day, you will help your child keep the learning 'habit'.

Steve Williams

Dartmoor Federation SENDCo