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Dear Families,

We hope that you are enjoying the sunshine and have managed to get some routine into family life. We are now clear that this situation is going to continue for a while and so we are making plans to continue to support you as much as possible.

Free School Meals Eligibility

Our admin teams worked hard to ensure that all families entitled to the vouchers received them. You will have seen in the press that this was not a smooth process with the system crashing many times. The government has now extended the voucher system to support families where finances have become difficult because of the virus. Each academy admin team will be sending out the paperwork so please email the 'info@' email address if you feel that you may now be eligible.

Family Support Workers

Our FSWs have continued to work throughout this crisis and are supporting many more families who find themselves in need of help for a variety of reasons. Please remember that we have this support if you are in need of it and feel that it will help your family situation.

Home Learning

We have had positive feedback from so many families about our approach to home learning but there have also been many questions. While staying at home due to coronavirus, parents and carers will be concerned about their children's education and the impact of missing school.

We are aware that some families would like some further support and direction with the home learning that has been set, with more opportunity to build in routines with their children. The executive team and head teachers all met yesterday to consider how we approach this in the longer term. We have re-evaluated the home learning offer based on the following principles:

- we need to build in routine and structure (routine doesn't necessarily mean an 'hour by hour' timetable).
- learning must be purposeful
- communication needs to be simple and clear, especially with the increasing number of online and BBC resources
- expectations must be realistic
- home-learning is not 'home-teaching'. Supporting pupils' home-learning must not be an additional pressure on parents and does not require them to have the subject knowledge to be teachers
- the learning that we are providing should be largely revisionary and provide basic skills-building, although there will need to be some carefully introduced new learning which will be essential when preparing for a new year group
- activities provided for children should be in a range of formats-not all resources can require access to a screen as this will be a challenge in many homes



- we need to keep in touch with children and parents to check in on progress and to provide ongoing support. This must be proportional and manageable for teachers.
 - parents should be offered support that is practical, focusing on clear guidance that they can act on (eg small prompts for shared reading or tips for how long to keep their child studying)
- In order to meet these principles, you may find there have been some changes to your child's home learning offer.

Our main wish is that all children in the Kite Academy Trust return to us with their confidence in place, their wellbeing high and then we can start to teach them and 'plug' any gaps that time out of school has created.

For us it will be much more challenging to meet the academic needs of our pupils if they come back unable to follow a routine, unable to work independently, with low self-esteem and poor wellbeing. Those areas would need to be addressed before any child was ready to take on new learning.

Answers to some of our most Frequently Asked Questions may be found on the accompanying sheet but with all this in mind, do what works for you and your family.

If you are having any specific issues please let the class teacher know through your usual communication channel.

Childcare

Within the childcare settings we are also supporting your children with learning. If you send the learning with them in the morning, we will endeavour to support your child with this. However, because there are staff in the schools, we may do something with a group of children that is not necessarily what your child has brought with them. Please do not worry that you need to complete the other tasks when they get home.

Please keep safe.

Yours sincerely



Christine Dickinson
CEO The Kite Academy Trust

Frequently Asked Questions about learning from home during Covid-19 closures.

How do I structure the day?

- Do not worry about trying to maintain a full routine for your child like they had at school. We must remember that although a child is in school for six hours there are many times that the children are learning social skills at play time, lunch times, assemblies and during the time that they are in the classroom with their class. However, children will feel more comfortable and learn better with a predictable routine to the day, even if this is difficult. Try to agree the previous day/week, what that routine will look like but most importantly, **make it work for you too**. Schools have offered advice on how to structure the day. But generally, you should try to make sure that your children:

- get up and go to bed at the same time each day
- have regular meal times
- have regular breaks
- make time to be active - children are used to regular play at lunch and break times

...and for many, focused learning time of 15 minutes may be the maximum you can expect before they need a movement break!

https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/videos/EEF_Supporting_daily_routines_during_school_closures.mp4

Do try to promote self-regulation in your child through goal-setting, planning, perseverance, and the management of time, materials, attentiveness, and emotions. A 'five minute plan' chat with your child before they get started with home learning can pose helpful reflection and involve you in ways that you can help.

You might like to create a daily plan and review based on this one:

https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/Covid-19_Resources/Resources_for_parents/Supporting_home_learning_routines_-_Planning_the_day.pdf

How much should my child be being doing at home?

Your child's teacher will have set daily home school activities to complete and of course it would be great if they could complete them all. However, for some children and some family circumstances that is not possible and might create more harm than good.

Focus on the maths and English tasks if you can but some days the art (or other foundation subjects) activity may be more appropriate to their mindset. There are no rules and you know your child/ren.

What is the parent's role in home-schooling?

Please do not worry about recreating school at home. For most children it is their relaxation place away from school so trying to combine the two could make your child confused and even more anxious. Your main role is to continue to ensure your child is happy, calm and stimulated.

Although we are sending out educational activities for your child/ren, we do not necessarily expect progress to be made.

But DO continue to read each day.

What if my child can't complete the tasks in the day?

There is always another day! If your child is struggling emotionally or with the task itself, then take a break, choose your battles and come back to it another day if appropriate.

Remember not all lessons have to be academic. Use this opportunity to teach them life skills such as folding clothes, cooking, hoovering and even washing up!

Am I doing too much? Am I doing too little? How much should we be helping?

There are no rules! As parents, you know you own child/ren and the best thing is to be guided by them and your own circumstances. Every family situation is different, and every child learns at different rates. In the classroom, children are surrounded by resources to help them – however learning at home can be quite lonely. They do not have their peers to bounce their ideas off or constant reassurance from their teachers that they are working along the right lines. This is where you come in to reassure and support! Allow your child time to think about how they could solve the problem, talk through possible solutions and remember it does not matter if they get it wrong – misconceptions will be addressed at a later date by their teacher.

At the start of each task, go through what is expected with your child. Ask questions to check their understanding. Try to address misunderstanding, then encourage them to work independently – once back at school they won't have the luxury of one to one support all day! Try not to sit next to them during the whole task. Make it clear what they should do if they get stuck – e.g. look at the word sheet, picture etc. and then if they really need help ask you for it.

How can I help all my children of different ages all at the same time?

The answer is simple – you can't. If they are not able to work independently, then do something together that they will all engage with such as cooking, gardening, playing a board games or reading stories. You could build in some one -to- one at different points through the day whilst the other children are engaged in activities or play independently.

What are you expecting my child to share with you?

Approximately one piece of learning a week, which their teacher will aim to respond to in two working days. This is not a 'marking' exercise but intended to share a child's sense of achievement and motivate them for future learning. This may be a photo of a model, a piece of writing - or maybe a question that the child simply doesn't understand.

How do I keep my child safe online when using digital devices?

Do set age-appropriate parental controls on any devices your child is using and supervise their use of websites and apps. Follow [advice on keeping them safe online](#) and talk to your child about online safety. Manage screen time with a timer and break up screen time by getting your child to:

- use books and other printed materials that their school has provided or that you have at home
- write by hand – try asking them to complete work by hand, write a diary, a summary of things they have learned or done each day or 'to do' lists
- be active and get away from the screen regularly – see a selection of [physical activity resources](#) for primary school children
- stop using digital devices at least an hour before bed

7 Top Tips to Support Reading at Home

Shared reading is a great way to develop children's language and communication and to boost their reading skills. Regular reading routines can offer lots of opportunities for learning during school closures.

- 1 Concentrate on reading quality (it isn't all about reading lots!)



Don't worry too much about the 'what' and 'how' of reading each day. Books are great—but leaflets, comics, recipes and instructions on a webpage can all be great too. Following a recipe to make some cupcakes is valuable reading. Be on the lookout for reading, wherever it is!

- 2 Ask your child lots of questions



All reading matters. Shared reading is about 'reading with', not just 'reading to' (even for older children). So, ask lots of 'Wh' questions, such as Who? What? When? Where? Why? Try them when talking about books: for example, 'what do you think Harry is feeling?'

- 3 Ask your child to make predictions about what they have read



If it is a book, look at the front cover—or the last chapter—and talk about what might happen next. Look for clues in the book and be a reading detective! For example, 'can you see the bear on the front cover? Where do you think he will go?'

- 4 Ask your child to summarise what they have read



When you've finished reading, talk about what happened. Acting out the things that happened in the story or describing the big idea of a chapter is really fun and maximises learning. For example, 'can you remember all the things that happened on the bear hunt?'

- 5 Ask your child to write about what they have read



Write, or draw pictures, from anything you've read! Big writing and pictures are even more fun. For example, use an old roll of wallpaper to make a treasure map with clues from the stories you've read together.

- 6 Read and discuss reading with friends or family



Make books a part of the family. Encourage your child to share them with a relative or friend, over a video call. Laugh about them when you are making meals together. For example, 'I hope the tiger doesn't come to tea today!'

- 7 Maintain the motivation to read



Talk about the joy of reading whenever you can. Your child is on an amazing journey to becoming a reader. Put them in the driving seat and have fun on the way! For example, 'choose your favourite story for bedtime tonight.'