

Supporting your child's learning at home

We have created the following document, as several parents/ carers have asked for advice on how to support their child at home whilst schools are closed.

One of the key secrets to success in homes and schools is having a clear and consistent routine.

Children thrive of consistence of having a routine. Children often fear the unknown – whether it's the broccoli on their plate – or a big change like schools closing. While change is a learning opportunity, it can also be stressful for children. A normal routine brings comfort and consistency to a child's life.

A clear schedule for each day or week will help the children to understand the change to their normal daily routine and adapt to school closure. It will also allow them to be able to anticipate and look forward to future events – such as going to the park on Friday. It also allows them to have sense of control when things feel beyond their control.

Below is **an example** of a weekly schedule or routine which you and your family could implement over the following weeks.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
6am-8am	Free play				
8am-9am	Breakfast and discuss the days schedule				
9am - 9.30am	Reading	Maths	Reading	Maths	Reading
9.30-10.00am	Creative task	Outside time	Family walk	Creative task	Outside time
10.00-10.30am	Maths	Writing	Maths	Reading	Writing
10.30-11.00	Snack				
11.00-11.30	Writing	Outside time	Writing	Writing	Maths
11.30-12.00	Outside time	Screen time	Outside time	Outside time	Outside time
12.00-1.00pm	Lunch and dedicate time for play				
1.30-2.00pm	Down time	Reading	Creative task	Screen time	Creative task
2.00-2.30pm	Play board game / game	Dedicate time for play	Down time	Dedicate time for play	Outside time
2.30pm-3.00pm	Outside time	Outside time	Outside time	Family walk	Screen time

Top tips on how to set your own routine for your child

Start with their school routine

Use school as the framework and honour what had been your child's routine:

- When are they used to having breakfast? Snack? Lunch?
 - Break time is at 10.30-10.45 for Key Stage 1 and 11.00-11.15 for Key Stage 2
 - Lunch is 12.15-1.00pm
- Break the day into small chunks much like school does with subjects.

Learn from the world around you.

We have sent learning packs home already, there are also many links on the school website to support your child's academic learning. However, learning occurs in many different ways. Exploring the world around you is a great way to support your child's development and learning. Go for a "nature walk" within your local community, pointing out and discussing what you see. Encourage your kids to make games out of reading labels and counting objects in your home. You might be surprised at what they come up with.

Dedicate time for play

Once you've mapped out times for things like food and time to complete some learning tasks, you're ready to fill in the rest of the day, and actually carving out time for dedicated child-led play is huge for children regardless of their age. When a child is imagining, creating, building or inventing, they are doing some serious learning.

In your new daily schedule, have a few 15- to 30 minute blocks (more or less time depending on your child's age) of dedicated child-led play.

For older children, you could play board games during this time.

Build in reading

Study after study shows the importance of reading to children. Being home all day is a great chance to increase this habit.

Plan in reading blocks. Fifteen to 20 minutes a day is a great place to start. Consider structuring this reading block in a few different ways: parent reads aloud, child reads aloud and family shared reading time. And if your child wants to extend a reading period, don't worry too much about messing up the schedule. There's no such thing as too much reading, and you can always save a planned activity for the next day.

Build in writing and maths

Writing can be in many different forms. It can include things like writing an email to the class teacher, keeping a diary, writing letters to friends and family, writing the shopping list, mark marking, playing schools, book reviews, blogging on website, writing a story or writing the instructions for a game they have made up.

Please continue to check the school's website, we will continue to update this with a range of ideas and tasks. All children have access to their class teachers' emails so they can share any work with the class teachers – or just drop them an email to say hi.

Make a screen time routine

There are two types of screen time; screen time linked to learning and screen time for enjoyment such as playing the Xbox. We are aware that we directed you to lots of online programmes and resources which can be used to support your child's learning.

The following is advice linked to screen time related to PlayStation or Xbox's or other similar devices or entertainment.

To keep your child/ren from "over-indulging" on screens:

Make screen time predictable: have a set time in the schedule so children know when to expect screen time (like while you make lunch or dinner) and for how long.

Turn it off: Follow through when the scheduled time for screens is over, and don't leave TV on as background noise. If the house feels too quiet, turn on some music instead.

Build specific time in the schedule to be creative

Try to build in activities that foster creativity such as art, music or construction. You do not need to be an expert at these things. Art can be drawing with a pencil or building a structure with sticks. Music can be singing together (off-key is fine!) or drumming a rhythm on the table for your child to repeat back to you. Movement can be making up your own dance. Don't worry — your child will come up with his or her own ideas, too!

Schedule two or three times a day to get outside.

Be physically active! It's important for staying healthy, it's a great stress reliever, it helps us focus when we get back to work, and it makes it easier to sleep at night.

A lot of what children like to do is done outside. Try going for a family walk or challenge each other to skip, hop and jump as many times as you can. Ride bikes or scooters. Do simple exercises like jumping jacks or more complex moves like cartwheels.

If you can't get outside, or you live in a place where you can't be at a safe distance from others outside, play physical games indoors, like Simon Says, Freeze Dance, or Red Light, Green Light. And who doesn't love to have a dance party in the kitchen? Also consider virtual playdates with friends and family. It's a great way to check in on each other during this time.

Set aside some quiet time.

Naps are still important for young children. Older children need some predictable downtime, too, especially in a stressful and uncertain time like this. You can find lots of great free mindfulness apps and activities online. Here are a few websites

<https://www.mindful.org/>

<https://www.headspace.com/meditation/kids>

<https://blissfulkids.com/>

<https://www.cosmickids.com/mindfulness-meditation-videos-kids/>

Set scheduled meal times and snack times.

Giving in to the urge to eat all day long will just make you and your kids lethargic. And having set times gives everyone a break to look forward to.

Keep loose but predictable afternoon and evening schedules.

If you normally do a bath every day, stay in that groove. If you have a limit on screen time on school days, stick to it, or if you want to expand it, do it in an intentional way so your child know the rules. And seize the opportunity to do new things. Maybe you've always wanted to have family dinners, but work schedules prevented it. This is a great time to add that to your family routine.

Plan a routine you can stick to.

Of course, planning a routine is easier than sticking to it. Here are some suggestions for making it actually work.

- Engage your child in making the schedule. This will help them buy into it. For example, let your child/ren each chose which subject to start with and opted to alternate art and music every other day.
- Post your daily schedule, so everyone knows what to expect, and so you can point to it instead of answering constant questions about when something is going to happen. A great place to do this is the fridge and plan to go over it while we eat breakfast.
- If you fall out of your schedule, don't worry about it. Just reset and try again. Make adjustments if you need to.
- Keep in mind that having a predictable schedule doesn't mean you have to live by a rigid clock. In fact, this can be a good opportunity to loosen up some time limitations that may have been stressing you out. Instead of having to ensure that everyone has had breakfast and at school by 8.50am you can now enjoy letting the kids sleep until their bodies are ready to wake up.

Above all, as you navigate your new routine, try to keep a sense of humor. This can be difficult in times of crisis, but it's also more important than ever. Fortunately, kids give us lots of wonderful reasons to laugh.

If you need any more support please do not hesitate to contact me during school hours.

Kind regards
Mrs Shorten