



G A Y T O N P R I M A R Y S C H O O L
G A Y T O N R O A D • H E S W A L L • W I R R A L • C H 6 0 8 P Z

Tuesday 31st March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

I am aware that as we nearly reach the midpoint of week 2 of home learning, some parents may be feeling stressed, overwhelmed, worried and under pressure with everything that is happening. During these unprecedented times, this is completely normal. Some of you may be really enjoying the extra time that you are now spending with your children; others will be trying to juggle some form of home education whilst working as well. And others would quite happily send their children back to school - right now if they could!

We are setting home learning activities for parents via the school website. Your child has been provided with their eschools password which is stuck in their home learning book. Please do not think that your child has to complete all these activities. They are purely there as a guide for parents and to support you at this difficult time. We are never going to contact parents to see if your child has completed them, but we wanted to provide something that is there for you, if you want to use it. If you feel it is too much, please just use whatever you want to or alternatively don't use any of it.

Please don't expect your child to work from 9:00am-3:30pm completing these activities as it just isn't possible and unless they are very committed and dedicated to home learning, they just won't manage. Small bursts of work activities are much more beneficial for them and they will need breaks - lots of them, to break up the day and provide some structure.

Frustration and anger can build very easily in a home environment as children struggle to deal with their emotions. Being out of school for what is an open-ended period, with restricted access to their friends, school life etc, is likely to be difficult for many young people. Therefore, where possible, we need to try and minimise the stress and if necessary completely remove the stress of home learning, if it is becoming too much of an issue. Children will have good days, bad days and days in between and sometimes there will be no particular reasons for that and this can be hard as a parent to understand.

Tips for parents and carers:

*Stress and anxiety in such an unusual and unpredictable situation is normal.

*Friendships are key to maintaining resilience for children, so help them to maintain these relationships through phone calls, online communication and writing letters.

*Normalise the experience for young people by reassuring them that there are lots of other people in the same situation right now.

*Having a routine and structure helps children to feel secure in uncertain times (but don't make the routine and structure too unachievable).

*Don't put too much pressure on doing school work. Parents and carers aren't teachers, and it is important to also spend time building relationships, enjoying shared activities and reassuring children.

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*Play is fundamental to the wellbeing and development of children of all ages, and a great way to reduce stress in adults and children.

*Please don't compare yourself to other families. Everyone's own circumstances are unique and everyone needs to deal with this in their own way.

Website:

I have now uploaded to our school website a whole section on COVID-19. Here you will find all the home learning information in one place, so you don't have to trawl through messages that have been sent home. You will also find a page of COVID- 19 support ideas that have been compiled from a wide range of sources to try and help parents cope at this incredibly challenging time. I will aim to keep this updated as much as possible as new information is shared and updated.

I just want parents to know that what you are being asked to do at the moment is really hard and that we are all here to support you, even if it is remotely. Everyone in our school community, needs to focus on the most important thing right now, which is keeping your child/ren safe and getting through this as a family.

Remember, learning is far more than responding to tasks online and all of the following are just as valuable: cooking, cleaning, tidying up, playing family games, gardening, any form of physical exercise, listening to stories, reading, learning a new skill, craft activities, playing with lego and imaginative play amongst many other things.

Education can't and shouldn't be your number one priority now. As a school, we will pick this up when we are allowed to resume to some form of normality. The activities online are just there to allow your child to consolidate and revise some key learning. But for now, just do what feels manageable for you as a family and remember right now your child/dren are relying on you to be their constant source of reassurance and support; this can be very challenging and it is important that parents look after their own mental health and wellbeing as well.

Finally, below I am sharing a message which has been written by Emily W King who is a psychologist. I feel that this really does help parents to appreciate that you can't physically do everything at the moment and that actually just being with your child, cuddling them and reassuring them is just as important as any form of home learning.

Please stay safe everyone and look after each other.

Kind regards,

Mrs McAleny

Public Service Announcement

Parents: What we are being asked to do is not humanly possible. There is a reason we are either a working parent, a stay-at-home parent, or a part-time working parent.

Working, parenting, and teaching are three different jobs that cannot be done at the same time. It's not hard because you are doing it wrong. It's hard because it's too much. Do the best you can.

When you have to pick, because at some point you will, choose connection. Pick playing a game over arguing about an academic assignment. Pick teaching your child to do laundry rather than feeling frustrated that they aren't helping. Pick laughing, and snuggling, and reminding them that they are safe.

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If you are stressed, lower your expectations where you can and virtually reach out for social connection. We are in this together to stay well. That means mentally well, too.

Emily W King

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