



Denmead Junior School

Building success, inspiring curiosity

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Friday 20th March 2020

Dear parents and carers,

Letter to parents and carers

Since the Prime Minister's announcement on Wednesday, local Head Teachers have been sharing via email ideas and best ways of how to organise everything that the government have asked us to do. One Head shared this letter and I cannot improve on the wording and therefore want to pass it on to you:

The national picture is changing very rapidly. We are working to re-open the school on Monday for the children of keyworkers, and those that are vulnerable according to government criteria. While the risk remains lower for children they can still become ill and can carry the virus to other vulnerable people including school staff.

The government has given us some principles to follow, the first of which is that, if it is possible, all children to should be at home. Wherever possible social distancing should now be in place for your families and for your children when they are away from school. This means they should not be going to the park unsupervised or gathering in each other's houses.

Please remember, schools have been closed to stop the spread of the virus... this will only work if the children are kept home. It is hugely disrespectful to health workers and those struggling with the virus if we choose to ignore the latest government guidance.

I did want to share some thoughts with you. You might be inclined to create a minute by minute timetable for your children. You may have high hopes of hours of learning, including online activities, experiments, and book reports. You'll limit technology until everything is done! But these are the things I want you to consider...

Our children are just as scared as we are right now. Our children not only hear everything going on around them, but they feel our constant tension and anxiety. They have never experienced anything like this before, and so have most of the adults around them. Although the idea of being off school for 4 weeks or more sounds exciting for some, they are probably picturing a fun time like summer break, not the reality of being trapped at home and not seeing their friends.

Over the coming weeks, you might see an increase in behaviour issues with your children. Whether it's anxiety, or anger, or protest that they can't do normal things - it will probably happen. You will potentially see more meltdowns, tantrums, and oppositional behaviour in the coming weeks. This is normal and expected under these circumstances.

What children need right now is to feel comforted and loved. To feel like it is all going to be okay. That might mean that you need to tear up your perfect timetable and focus on giving them lots of love and attention. I know this may be hard if you have the added pressure of trying to work at home with the children there. Please try and play outside and go on walks. Bake biscuits and paint pictures. Play board games and watch movies. Do a science experiment together or find virtual field trips of the zoo. Read together as a family. Snuggle under warm blankets and do nothing.



Don't worry about them regressing in school. Every single child is in this boat and they all will be okay. When we are back in the classroom, we will focus on their learning and meet their educational needs. Teachers are experts at this! Don't pick fights with your children because they don't want to do their maths. Don't scream at your children for not following the timetable. Don't insist on 2 hours of learning time if they are resisting it. See if you can make the day fun through their play.

If I can leave you with one thing, it's this: at the end of all of this, their mental health will be more important than their academic skills. How they felt during this time will stay with them long after the memory of what they did during these weeks is gone. So keep that in mind, every single day.

I would just like to share with you our Happiness Ambassadors' list of positive thoughts about the current situation:

- can do homework in bed!
- lots of time to catch up on work and learn new things.
- we could discover a new hobby.
- Tiktok-lots of dances to learn.
- no early wake ups!
- eat what you like.
- no school uniform – PJs!
- no having to ask to go to the toilet.
- time to relax – and maybe try yoga.
- more time to spend in the garden
 - we can make our own scooting park
 - building dens – we could sleep in them!
- it's like P.E whenever we like!
- a relaxed bedtime.
- makeovers.
- spending time with families – our siblings.
- pillow fights.
- baking.
- bike riding and being outside.



It's good for our planet too:

- less pollution because we're using cars less.
- we're all working together more.
- we could use the time litter picking to help the environment.

Stay safe.

Elaine Viner
Head Teacher

