



SCHOOL CLOSURE- NEWSLETTER 1

01404 812599 Friday 27th March 2020. Website www.west-hill-primary.devon.sch.uk

Dear Parents,

I hope you are all keeping safe and looking after each other during this very challenging time. I wanted to keep in touch with you and your children and thought a weekly newsletter might be a good idea to share top tips and ideas.

Lots of people are feeling stressed, overwhelmed and under pressure by everything that's happening. This includes the work being sent home for your child. I wanted to give my perspective on it all as a Headteacher and I hope this will help.

A few points to note first:

- 1)** This is not home schooling. This is an unprecedented emergency situation impacting on the whole world. Let's keep perspective. Home schooling is a choice, where you considered, you plan for it and you are your child's school teacher in whatever form you choose. This is, at best, distance learning. In reality, none of us know what we're doing and what's right and wrong here.
- 2)** You are, and always have been, your child's primary educator. If you decide that your child isn't going to engage with anything sent home and is going to spend the entire period playing in the dirt, or baking, or watching TV, then that is your choice. That is your right. There is nothing to stress or feel guilty about.
- 3)** Schools don't know what they're doing either. They had no notice, no preparation time and we were NOT told to 'continue to plan lessons as normal and just send them home' - that's NOT possible. If it were, we'd all be out of a job!
- 4)** It is not possible to facilitate distance learning with a primary aged child and work from home at the same time. The very idea is nonsense. If you're trying to do that, stop now. You can certainly have activities where your child learns, but your focus is your job, and survival. Again, unprecedented.

FAQs:

Q1- My school has sent home lots of physical work. Pages and pages, hours and hours. How am I supposed to get through it all?

A- You're not, don't try. Your child's teacher spent a couple of hours in utter panic gathering things to send home so they could say they did their best and there wasn't a lot of complaints that enough didn't go home. It's not a competition, or a race.

Q2- My school have sent home links and emails with more work. How do I make it stop?

A- See above. These are suggestions and ideas because the school is worried they're not offering enough. Use them if they suit you, don't if they don't suit. If you're getting stressed, stop opening the emails. No one will know!

Q3- Someone in my child's class has everything done and we've barely started. Will they fall behind?

A- Even if everything were equal in terms of support, time and number of children (which it's not) all children learn at different rates. In the class there's a wide range of levels in all subjects, there's different paces and there are many children working on differentiated levels of work. It's almost impossible for teachers to differentiate at the moment, so you don't have to do it either. Your child will not fall behind. This is all revision and reminder work. If children could all learn new concepts without specific teaching, we wouldn't need teachers. They will cover all of this again, multiple times.

Q4- I'm not doing any work with my kids. All they're doing is building Lego, cooking and playing outside.

A- All of this is learning -very valuable learning. Give yourself and them a break.

Q5- How can I get three different lots of work done with 3 different kids of different ages?

A- You can't, stop trying. If they're old enough, try to get them to do little bits independently. Otherwise try to do something they can all engage with, reading a story together, some free writing, baking etc.

Q6- So what's the bare minimum you'd expect?

A- For me, survival mode. I won't pretend that may be true of all teachers, but you know what? If they can't have perspective in a time like this then I wouldn't overly worry about their opinion anyway.

You are doing enough. You are loving your kids and supporting them through a difficult time. Look after yourself. Minimising stress is absolutely vital in a time like this for mental health. Don't let this be something that stresses you. Only you can control that by accepting it is in your circle of control, you are the primary educator and this is all your call.

Please remember that today we should be breaking up for the Easter holiday so please ensure you and your children have a good break and leave the school work until after the holiday has finished. You will both feel better for it, I'm sure!

Struggling to find bread?

Why not make your own easy no yeast dinner rolls?

1 cup flour
1 tsp baking powder
1 tsp salt
1/2 cup milk
2 tablespoons mayo

Combine all ingredients.

Spoon into a greased muffin pan.

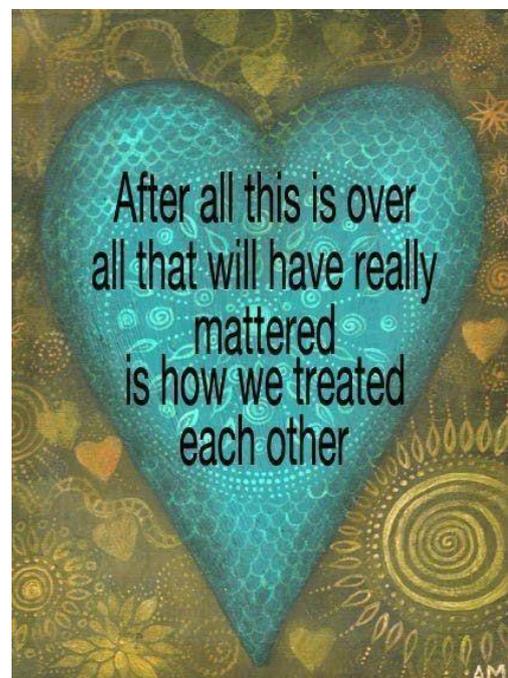
Cook in a preheated oven at 180 for 15 minutes or until done and golden brown.

Makes approx. 5 rolls



Edinburgh Zoo live zoo cam

If you have children who say they are bored, you can type in Edinburgh live zoo cam. The children can watch the animals being fed etc.



Helpful daily resources for parents from the NSPCC

9.00am - PE with Joe Wicks

https://youtu.be/6v-a_dpwhro

10.00am - Maths with Carol Vorderman

www.themathsfactor.com

11.00am - English with David Walliams

<https://www.worldofdavidwalliams.com/elevenses/>

12.00pm - Lunch (cooking with Jamie Oliver)

<https://www.jamieoliver.com/features/category/get-kids-cooking/>

1.00pm - Music with Myleene Klass

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQh2wgJ5tOrIXYBn6jFXsXQ>

1.30pm - Dance with Darcey Bussell

<https://twitter.com/diversedancemix/status/1241098264373592065>

2.00pm - History with Dan Snow (free for 30-days)

<https://tv.historyhit.com/signup/package>

4.00pm - Home Economics with Theo Michaels (Mon/Wed/Fri)

<https://www.instagram.com/theocooks>

20 things to try together

If you need some further ideas of how to occupy your child then take a look at this:

<https://www.otteryprimary.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/things-to-try-together.pdf>

Keeping your cup full

Let's invest in our well-being during times of crisis. The impact of being alone or separated from the ones we love, a sense of imprisonment or financial strain WILL empty our cup. Find the little things that fill your cup. Be kind to yourselves today so you're better prepared for tomorrow.



Do you have anything to share?

If you have anything useful you would like to share with other parents, then please drop me an e-mail at admin@... and I can include it in future newsletters. Thank you!

30 day Lego challenge

Bring some structure to playtime and stop the kids from getting bored by trying the 30-day Lego challenge that has been circulating on social media.

The plan outlines a daily challenge that you can set for the children, from 'build a house' to 'design a new space rocket'.

By setting new tasks, children will see their old toys in a new way and be encouraged to think outside the box. Hopefully it will give you a few minutes of peace and quiet, too.

You can find it at:

<https://thatbricklife.com/lego-challenge-30-days-of-play-calendar/>



An idea for the kids

Our children are living through history right now. So why not get them to make a time capsule.

1. Write a letter to themselves. Tell their ages, who their friends are, favourite TV show, song, book, etc. Write about what's going on. In their own word. Tell their future self how they feel. Talk about what they would like to be when they grow up and 5 things they want to do when they are an adult.

2. If it's safe to get a newspaper get one and let them cut out articles that they think would be important for their future self. Or print them out online

3. Draw a picture of their family as it is now.

4. Take some pictures of today, print them out and include them in the box

5. Put it all together in a scrapbook or a lunch box and stick it up in the attic or somewhere you won't get at for years to come.