

## **Nettleham Church of England Aided Junior School**

### **Home Schooling Survival Guide**

Most of us have found ourselves in brand new territory this week. Having to work from home, manage the kids, keep them from wrecking the house and trying to get them to do some school work all at the same time – it is a tall order even for the most ‘super human’ amongst us.

We wanted to give you a few **‘top tips and tools’** to help you get through this season.

#### **1) The well-being of your children is paramount.**

Your children need to feel safe, secure and loved. Their routine has been turned upside down, their ‘altogether’ adults may be slightly more stressed and everything seems uncertain. Ensuring your children feel safe and loved must come before anything else. Lots of cuddles, sofa time, fun games together, family movie times, hearing you read to them, following some soothing mindfulness apps (smiling mind – is a free app) as well as cooking, eating and laughing together. We cannot underestimate what all this is doing inside those tiny, vulnerable minds. If they are expressing worries then talk about them, normalise them and reassure them (we have some additional resources and techniques if you need them). If your children appear fine, still ensure that your time together is fun and loving so they know you are there 100% for them at all times.

#### **2) Getting started!**

The best way is to keep a routine going – getting up, breakfast, getting dressed. This will bring normality into your day. We would advise you to create some kind of plan/timetable for the day or week. It is up to you if you want to do this day by day or as whole week. Give the children ownership over this and help them to make good choices. Have a look at the ‘school’ activities that are available to them on our website and ask them to pick 2 or 3 for each day (maybe a maths one, and English one and another). Get them to write a list of other activities they would like to do during their day – it could be exercise, games, making, baking, playing, designing board games, playing in the garden, PlayStation, x-box, chatting to friends, chatting to family members on the phone, playing with the dog etc... Once you have your 2/3 ‘school based’ activities timetable these into your day, allowing the children to have some element of choice around when this happens and then slot in their ‘choice’ activities. The plan helps you to keep them accountable to what they have committed to and gives them a sense of achievement when they have completed tasks (tick them off, put stickers on etc...)

#### **3) Know your child**

You know your child. In school we expect the children to sit at a desk and work for sustained periods of time – this is what they ‘know,’ this is what they expect at school. The home environment is very different and they are not used to this regime at home (many of you will no doubt have a battle even to get them to do homework). We understand this. Please do not try to replicate school at home – this will be unrealistic for you and for them. You might find they work better doing all their tasks in one go and then have the rest of the day to themselves or you might find that they appear to have the concentration of a flea and you will need to break it up into much smaller chunks. If you are having to work from home (as many of us are) try as much as possible (particularly if your children are younger) to be present whilst they are on task. This may mean adapting the times you are able to complete your work tasks, which is frustrating no doubt, but for your kids all of this is also so different for them. Using timers and stop watches may be helpful so the children are aware that they have a set time to ‘work.’

#### 4) Be creative and active

This will come more naturally to some than others – how can the maths task be made more practical or interactive, how can you include maths, reading, comprehension etc... into other everyday tasks (without the kids even being aware!) Set family challenges – most press-ups/star jumps whilst spellings are being written down or times tables recited. Ask the children to design and make a board game incorporating some maths or English elements, listen to audio books (loads have been made free) etc... There is a brilliant Facebook page that has been set up called 'Plan C' – there are so many amazing practical ideas on there – join up there are loads of fun ideas!

If things seem to be going all wrong then here are some **'top tips and tools'** taken from the SUMO4Schools Parent course, that Sarah Hollamby and her husband run in schools around Lincolnshire, that may help regain sanity in the house.



**Press Pause** – when stress levels increase and things become tense do not underestimate the power of pressing pause. Our brains become flooded with chemicals and emotions which actually makes the logical and 'sensible' part of the brain shut down. We can't think properly, rationalise or sometimes even string a sentence together (and that is just us adults). If this begins to happen **PRESS PAUSE**. Stop the work you are trying to battle with, move away, and give everyone some cooling off time. This does not mean that your child gets away with not doing the task but at that moment in time no-one is in the right frame of mind. We all have to be stuck in the house together for potentially a number of weeks. It is not worth it! When everyone has calmed down come back to it and try again.



Have some **'Hippo Time'** – it is ok to be feel 'mad, bad and sad' – this is a challenging time for all of us and it is ok for us to occasionally have a bit of a 'wallow.' It is ok for our children to see us a bit upset from time to time, they are normal big emotions that everyone experiences from time to time. Hippo's wallow in mud for two main reasons – firstly to 'cool their blood,' – we may need time to cool off and calm down, give yourself and your children that time. Secondly a hippo will 'wallow' to heal and recover. Their skin will dry and crack in the heat of the environment in which they live. The moisture of the mud soothes and heals their skin. We all will need time to heal – factor this in. There are loads of different ways that we can do this some suggestions are: sit in the garden and breathe in the fresh air, walk around the garden, go and have a five minute lie on the bed, listen to some music, do some breathing exercises, read a book, do some exercise, move to a different room, do some colouring etc...



Remember **'TEAR'** – our **THINKING** affects our **EMOTIONS** which affects our **ACTIONS** which affects our **RESULTS**. We would encourage you (as much as possible) to focus on positive thoughts at this time as we know scientifically that this has a huge knock-on effect on productivity, well-being and focus. There are some handy ideas to help you focus on those positives:

- What are you thankful 'four' – list 4 things daily that you are grateful for
- Have a look at the action for happiness website ([www.actionforhappiness.org](http://www.actionforhappiness.org)) they have monthly calendars that you can print off which encourages positive actions
- Think about positive things you can do for your neighbours/family – a daily 'random act of kindness'
- At a mealtime go round the table and you each have to say 'what the best thing about your day has been.'



**Reward your progress/Celebrate Success** – some days you will feel like you are winning at life on others it will feel like you are trudging through treacle. Make sure you celebrate any progress made and the successes you have seen (even if it is just – you got out of your pyjamas!) Remember this is all new to you,

we are trained teachers and most of you are not – don't expect too much. Remember this phrase



**'what you focus on magnifies'** – celebrate those 'wins' however small. Maybe you and your children want to come up with a reward system – stickers, smiley face, ticks and perhaps they can work up to some free time, a block of time on technology, a snack etc..

We sometimes call this **'mini cheddars'** it is about small but frequent rewards for achievement and success. This helps to bring about focus and momentum. Remember that, what you and your child mean as success, may look very different to another – do not compare! This is uncharted territory for many – and adults – don't forget to reward your success too (perhaps not with just wine though!)

Lastly, we are still here for you and are available to help out as best we can. Please do not hesitate to get in contact with school and we will ensure that someone gets back to you as quickly as possible. Email is best for us at the moment: [enquiries@nettleham-junior.lincs.sch.uk](mailto:enquiries@nettleham-junior.lincs.sch.uk)



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