

20th March 2020

Cairney School – Guidance for Home Learning

These are unprecedented times and the change in advice re school closures from the beginning of the week to blanket closure announced on Thursday was very sudden. We had already started to make initial plans in the event of closure so that the children's learning could continue if they weren't able to attend school. However, the short time frame we ended up with has meant that we have had to do things quicker than we would have liked and therefore the plans might not be as quite robust as we would have liked!

Today we are sadly saying cheerio to the children of whom we are all very fond of and will miss dearly. We will miss seeing them grow in confidence and in their learning but look forward to seeing them back in school as soon as possible.

To try to facilitate continued learning at home we have tried to put together a pack that focusses on literacy and numeracy. The pack includes a number of reading books and or novels or for the older children our kindles. You may find the contents of the pack a bit overwhelming so please be aware this is not a race and we don't want anyone to be stressed about it. We also understand the difficulties that some of you may now face in working from home and supporting home learning with your children.

Reading at home with your children should mirror what happens in school. It is not a race to finish the books and the books should be paced as we do in school. Reading involves much more than just reading the words. Reading involves talking about the story, talking about likes and dislikes, predicting what is going to happen and looking at the vocabulary used by the author. We would ask that if your child has reading books home that are not accompanied by a set of questions or activities that the children be encouraged to write a little bit each time they read about e.g. The character, the story, where the story takes place or even if you are able to set them some simple questions to answer that would be brilliant too.

When it comes to spelling either the children have the spelling textbook that they use in school or they may have a workbook. We do not use workbooks in school and try to do our learning in as many different ways as possible. However, this is the way that we think would be easiest for yourselves. The children should, if possible, either do one unit a week from the text book or concentrate on one sound a week from the work book, or look at the words that are highlighted in the book for every week depending on the age and stage of the children. In school we don't just look at the words once and of course they are sent as homework. If the children are able to practise those words a few times during the week that would be really good for them and maybe it may be possible for you to do a spelling test with them on a Friday.

For maths most of the children have a textbook home with them which again is not how we do maths in school as we do a mixture of textbook tasks and practical tasks. However, we thought this would be the easiest option. Mrs Mitchell and I will endeavour to communicate via Twitter or Glow or email to give guidance as to what we would like the children to cover that week. The children will also come home with a mental maths book which they use in school, so they are familiar with it.

It is really important that the children are encouraged to undertake some form of short written task every day particularly for the younger children in the school who are now at the stage of confidently using their sounds to write independently. This does not

mean that we want them to write a novel – a little bit every day is better than a thesis on a Friday!

We acknowledge that technology is great when it works but can be extremely stressful and frustrating when it doesn't! We also know that we haven't had time to test whether our iPAD's will function properly on home networks and that not every child has access to a laptop or the internet. Please do not become anxious or worry if you are having difficulty using technology.

Inside the children's jotters there are logins for Glow, Sumdog and for some children other platforms that they use in school. Sumdog does not just offer a maths learning experience but also reading and spelling which we hope that the children will engage with if possible. Mrs Mitchell and I can monitor children's progress in Sumdog and can set tasks and assessments appropriate for individual children. It is really important therefore that the children undertake these activities independently. Sumdog platform is an adaptive resource which means it responds to individual children's performances and assigns tasks accordingly. This means that if you have more than one child you may see the children undertaking different activities.

We have also been practicing logging into Glow with the children and they have all been on our Cairney School Glow site Learner Zone. Through this site we plan to try to set the children wee challenges, e.g. STEM, Art, etc. and would hope that the children might be able to upload photographs, pieces of work into the document store. This is a place that every member of our children can see each other's work so we will be able to talk about it and celebrate it.

We have also set up a Google Classroom within our Cairney School Glow site which the children have been learning to use in the last two days and have done brilliantly. Through the Google Classroom Mrs Mitchell and I can set tasks which if it is possible the children can return them to us, and we can give them feedback about their learning. Again, this may not be possible for everyone and technology may let us down so please do not worry.

Having said all this we also value and understand that learning isn't all about the above! Learning can take place in many other ways and that is an ethos and an approach we try so hard to embrace in school. Such things as baking a cake, observing the environment, drawing a picture, making something, finding out about the news, enjoying a piece of music etc, etc. is learning and is so valuable to children's development. Do not underestimate the learning opportunities the children will have by undertaking all these wonderful things. We would love you to help the children record these learning experiences in their jotters with a photograph or even just bring the picture back to school.

I know this is a lot of information and it is designed to be of help, and I hope it is not too overwhelming.

Please stay safe, look after each other and we hope to see you very soon.

Kindest Regards

Kim Aplin
Head Teacher