



Westgate Primary School

Home Learning Guidance for Families

We recognise that an extended school closure presents significant challenges to families, particularly in terms of:

- Structuring each day, establishing routines
- Supervising learning
- Confidence in supporting children's learning
- Access to online resources, including keeping children safe online

This short document is intended to offer some initial guidance to help you, if you find yourself in this position. You may have several children of different ages to look after, have other caring responsibilities, and you may be trying to juggle supervision with working from home. Many of our teachers find themselves in similar positions, so we do understand the challenges this situation brings for you. With this in mind, staff have tried to plan learning which can be approached flexibly, and which does not require significant amounts of 'teaching' or adult input. We are also realistic about what can be achieved by primary school children learning remotely. All we can all do is our best!

Wherever possible, teachers will upload updates/ new tasks to the [VLE](#) in advance, ie at the start of the week for tasks set to choose over a week, or the evening before for daily tasks. **It is essential that you follow these instructions carefully: don't rush ahead with tasks, just complete the tasks for that day/ week, as best you can.**

Structuring Days, Establishing Routines

- Establish some routines that happen at the same time each day- simple daily tasks such as reading, practising spelling/ maths facts/ handwriting. Keep them short and space them out in order to break up the day.
- Decide on which tasks you are going to take longer with (extended, practical or project-based tasks) and break them into chunks over the week. Don't feel like you have to do everything every day!
- Plan for regular breaks and physical activity- for your sanity and your children's!
- Not every activity has to have a written outcome- change it up over a day.
- Your child's class teacher has already talked to the children about what a home learning day might look like.

Supervising Learning

- Teachers have tried to set tasks that require minimal face to face 'teaching', so you should not feel under pressure to try to closely replicate classroom learning.
- Make sure your child has somewhere comfortable and away from distractions to learn: a space at a table, TV/ radio/ music off.
- You can raise learning-related queries through the VLE with teachers. Responses may take up to 24 hours as teachers manage planning for learning and balance them with their own caring responsibilities. Be aware that up to 32 children/ families will be contacting them so be realistic about how many individual queries your child's teacher can respond to (see below).
- You are going to have to take difficult decisions about what you sacrifice to supervise learning. Think about maintaining the daily essentials if you want to give your child the best chances of maintaining the learning and progress they have already made. It will be difficult but there are no easy answers.

Confidence in Supporting Learning

- Teachers have focused initially on consolidation and reinforcement of learning already completed this year, particularly in English & mathematics, in order to avoid loss of progress made and in recognition of the wide range of confidence and experience parents have.
- Other learning planned includes open-ended, project-based tasks.
- No matter what the task, the focus should be on effort. You should expect your child to complete learning to the best of their ability- neatness, detail and accuracy, eg spelling, sentence construction (appropriate to their age and any additional needs they have) are key here.
- To support this, it would be helpful to plan in advance simple rewards (no/ low cost) and sanctions. If children are clear about this at the outset, and maybe have some input into what is fair and manageable, it will be easier for all of you.

Access to online resources, including keeping children safe online

- Each teacher has given suggestions of appropriate online resources, and tasks will be released through online channels, eg the VLE. Please use the websites teachers recommend.
- To help with planning around shared devices, daily tasks will be scheduled to upload to families the evening before, so that you can decide what to do, and when, each day.
- Too much screen time is not good for children, so plan regular screen breaks, ensure that screen-based tasks are time limited and make offline learning a priority.
- We are aware that unscrupulous people may use this as an opportunity to gain online access to children. Please:
 - Check your parental controls on all devices
 - Supervise your child while they are online
 - Use the NSPCC resources, Speak Out Stay Safe to discuss how to keep themselves safe online
 - Keep talking openly about what your child does online and encourage them to discuss it with you
 - A range of eSafety guides will be available on the school website next week for you to read.

Contacting staff

Teacher emails should only be used by parents and only in the event of a serious query, including being unable to access the VLE. Any replies may take up to 1-2 working days. Be realistic about what teachers can manage, working remotely to supervise and plan learning for 30+ pupils, learning about how to do this as we go along, and managing their own family's health and caring needs. Before you raise a query with your child's teacher(s), think about other ways that you can find the answer to your questions! These are as follows:

Nursery: h.robinson@westgateprimary.co.uk
Reception*: m.colannino@westgateprimary.co.uk and e.jagger@westgateprimary.co.uk
Year 1: k.senior@westgateprimary.co.uk (not Friday)
Year 2*: j.ireland@westgateprimary.co.uk and z.romaine@westgateprimary.co.uk
Year 3: j.hattersley@westgateprimary.co.uk
Year 4: h.hooper@westgateprimary.co.uk (not Monday)
Year 5: j.hopkins@westgateprimary.co.uk
Year 6: d.hackney@westgateprimary.co.uk
Me: head@westgateprimary.co.uk
Mrs Chilton: j.chilton@westgateprimary.co.uk
Mrs Eley: c.eley@westgateprimary.co.uk

* Please ensure both teachers are aware of your query, so that part-time staff can manage their workload.

Children must use the VLE if they need to contact their teacher, not email.

It's going to be a challenge, but we will all give it our best shot! Thank you.

H Carpenter
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