



St. Stephen's School
and Children's Centre
Learning for Life

Monday 1st February 2021

Letter 17-Headteacher Update

Dear Parents/Carers,

We realise that some of you are working from home or have younger ones to look after and in some cases your family members are ill. Therefore, we urge you to have a balanced approach to living in lockdown. Do what works with your family and avoid putting pressure on yourselves and your children. These are unusual times for us all and we are adjusting to this new way of working.

The guidance from the Department for Education is that Key Stage 1 pupils do a minimum of 3 hours of learning per day, with younger children participating in active play-based learning when appropriate. Key Stage 2 pupils are suggested to participate in 4 hours of learning activities per day. This is not necessarily in front of a computer.

Tips for successful remote learning

1. Establish routines and expectations

It is important to develop good habits from the start. Create a flexible routine and talk about how it's working over time. Chunk your days into predictable segments. Help your child to get up, get dressed and ready to learn at a reasonable time. Everybody make your bed! Keep normal bedtime routines, including normal rules for digital devices. Adjust schedules to meet everyone's needs but don't default to staying up late and sleeping in.

2. Choose a good place to learn

Your family's regular learning space for occasional homework might not work for extended periods. Set up a physical location that's dedicated to school-focused activities. Make sure it is quiet, free from distractions and has a good internet connection. Make sure an adult monitors online learning. Keep doors open, and practice good digital safety. Our teachers, safeguarding teams will do the same.

3. Stay in touch

Teachers are communicating regularly through our zoom meetings, phone calls and Google classroom to ensure everyone knows how to find the help they need to be



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successful. Remember to stay in contact with the school as we are here to support you.

4. Help your child to 'own' their learning

No one expects parents to be full-time teachers or to be educational and content matter experts. Provide support and encouragement, and expect your children to do their part. Struggling is allowed and encouraged! Don't help too much. Becoming independent takes lots of practice. At school, your child usually engages with other students and any number of adults hundreds of times each day. Many of these social interactions will continue from a distance, but they will be different. You cannot replace them all, and that's OK.

5. Begin and end the day by checking-in

In the morning, you might ask:

- What do you have to do today?
- How will you spend your time?
- What resources do you need?
- What can I do to help?

At the end of the day you might ask:

- How far did you get in your learning tasks today?
- Did you complete your tasks?
- What did you discover? What was hard?
- What could we do to make tomorrow better?

These brief grounding conversations matter. Checking in with your child helps to process instructions they received from their teachers, and it helps them organise themselves and set priorities. Not all children thrive in remote learning; some struggle with too much independence or lack of structure. These check-in routines can help avoid later challenges and disappointments. They help children to develop self-management and executive functioning that are essential skills for life. Parents are good life coaches.

6. Establish times for quiet and reflection



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For families with children of different ages, and parents who may also be unexpectedly working from home more often, it's good to build in some time for peace and quiet. Siblings may need to work in different rooms to avoid distraction. Many families will need to negotiate access to devices, priorities for wi-fi bandwidth and schedules throughout the day. Noise-cancelling headphones are an idea. And one day a week is already planned for independent, low-stress learning. Reading is fundamental.

7. Encourage physical activity and exercise

Living and working at home, we will all need some room to let off steam. Moving (independently and together as a family) is vital to health, wellbeing, and readiness for learning. It's a great opportunity to practice exercising 'alone together' with digital workouts and online instructors. Set new fitness goals and plan hands-on, life-ready activities that keep hands busy, feet moving, and minds engaged. You may want to think about how your children can pitch in more around the house with chores or other responsibilities. Now's a good time to think about increasing personal responsibility and pitching in.

8. Enjoy family time

We highly recommend that children have some fun down time. Some families in our community have been very creative by learning to sew, do a spot of gardening and playing board games. Why not play board games as a family? You can find some board game suggestions on the school website, under the Remote Learning tab:

<https://www.st-stephens-primary.org.uk>

Communication

As always if you have any specific concerns or worries please get in touch via email at mark.little@st-stephens.newham.sch.uk who will direct your email to the appropriate member of staff.

Thank you very much for your understanding at this very difficult time.
Keep safe and take care.

Yours sincerely,

Ms. Neena Lall OBE
Headteacher

Mr. Shashankar Jana
Chair of Governors



St Stephen's Primary School, Whitfield Road, London E6 1AS
Tel: 0208 472 7575 Fax: 0208 472 1575

Head teacher: Ms Neena Lall OBE Email: info@st-stephens.newham.sch.uk www.st-stephens-primary.org.uk

