

# St. Mary's Church of England Primary School Fownhope

## HOME AND ONLINE LEARNING POLICY



*What we nurture today, flourishes tomorrow*

**UPDATED APRIL 2020**

*A rich education is more than simply learning reading, writing and maths. It is about helping a child grow into their full potential as inquisitive, well balanced and cheerful adults. As a Christian school we nurture children to display the 'fruit of the Spirit', which is "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23). At St Mary's you will find children growing in mind, body and spirit as they form good relationships with each other, the staff and discover a faith which will sustain them in a rapidly changing world. As our motto has it: "what we nurture today flourishes tomorrow".*

## Context

From 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020, parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools to remain open only for those children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response, who absolutely need to attend.

Schools were asked to provide a programme of home learning for those children staying at home during this period.

St. Mary's staff met prior to the period of closure to agree a whole-school approach to this and agreed a plan for the first stage of this period (i.e. for the last two weeks of the spring term 2020).

## Expectations of Teachers

- Teachers will send home with children an exercise book containing a list of home learning tasks and websites with passwords to facilitate children's learning, at a level appropriate for the child's age.
- Teachers will set up 'class' email groups to enable them to communicate quickly with parents by email. All teachers will ensure that they use the BCC function to prevent parents seeing the email addresses belonging to other parents.
- Teachers will remind parents that the online passwords that have been given are for free activities. There is absolutely no requirement for parents to pay for any extras which are offered on sites, as everything the children need is accessible through the school's free subscription.
- Teachers will be unable to mark all of the children's work so will sometimes request that parents mark their child's work with them. The teacher will send answers or guidance to parents when necessary to enable them to judge whether their child has successfully completed the set task.
- Teachers will keep in contact with parents by email during the period of closure. It is up to the individual teacher how often they choose to do this. Teachers might, for example, find a new link to a website and recommend it to their class.
- Teachers will respond to a reasonable amount of emails from parents. This depends on the workload and availability of the individual teacher. It must be remembered that some teachers are still working in school one week in every three, so during these weeks they will have less time to communicate with parents via email.
- Teachers will log onto websites such as Times Tables Rock Stars to see how the children in their class are progressing. Again, there is no set expectation of how often teachers will do this, and there will be no consequences if children have not visited these sites or made much progress.

- Teachers will emphasise to parents that the work they are suggesting is only a guide and there will be no consequences if the work is not completed. We are also happy for parents to come up with their own home learning tasks.
- If a teacher or a member of their family becomes ill, then it is reasonable that communications with parents and children will be less frequent during this period.
- It must be remembered that the Easter holidays were due to take place for two weeks from Monday 6<sup>th</sup> April so as such teachers will need to take a well-earned break and will not necessarily be available to parents and children during this period.
- St. Mary's School will ensure that any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.
- As from the beginning of the summer term 2020, teachers teaching children in Years 1 - 6 will use the online platform 'Seesaw' to communicate with parents and set work for children. Teachers will be able to receive work and provide feedback using this package. The teacher in Reception will continue to do this using the online program 'Tapestry'.

### **Expectations of Parents and Children**

- Children will be expected to read regularly, as well as practising times tables and spellings at the appropriate level (this will be covered in the instructions from the class teacher, included with the exercise book).
- Parents will be reminded that the online passwords that have been given are for free activities. There is absolutely no requirement for parents to pay for any extras which are offered on sites, as everything the children need is accessible through the school's free subscription.
- Parents will be asked to provide support to enable their children to complete tasks set by the teacher. This may be in the form of giving them a daily timetable of activities or physically sitting with them and helping them to complete the work set.
- Parents are asked to mark their children's work when requested by the class teacher. When necessary the teacher will provide answers or guidance to the parents to ensure that the child has correctly completed the task.
- Parents may be asked by class teachers to submit completed tasks to teachers by email.
- If a child or a parent becomes ill, then it is reasonable that they will not engage in home learning to the same extent during this period.

- It is important for parents to remember that as well as the activities that the teachers have suggested, the closure period could be a great opportunity to allow children to follow their own interests, learn through play and take part in lots of practical learning. We are also happy for parents to come up with their own home learning tasks.
- It must be remembered that the Easter holidays were due to take place for two weeks from Monday 6<sup>th</sup> April so children and parents will need to take a break from home learning. Parents and children will be encouraged to enjoy family time together during this period and must remember that teachers will not necessarily be as available as they have been up to this point.
- As from the beginning of the summer term 2020, parents and children should use the online platform 'Seesaw' to complete and upload work for their teacher. Parents and children in Reception will continue to do this using the online program 'Tapestry'.

### **Longer-term Planning**

After the dates of the proposed Easter holidays, the Senior Leadership team will work 'virtually' with all teachers to assess the effectiveness of the home learning system so far. By this time, we may have a better idea of how long schools are likely to be closed for and whether we need to make further plans for home learning.

If, at any stage, St. Mary's School begins to teach 'virtual' lessons, especially if webcams are involved, the following rules should be followed:-

- No 1:1s, groups only.
- Staff and children must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.
- Any computers used should be in appropriate areas, for example, not in bedrooms; and the background should be blurred.
- The live class should be recorded so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed.
- Live classes should be kept to a reasonable length of time, or the streaming may prevent the family 'getting on' with their day.
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.
- Staff should record, the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

Please also see:-

St. Mary's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy (updated March 2020)

<https://www.stmarysschoolfownhope.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Child-Protection-and-Safeguarding-Policy-Updated-March-2020.pdf>

St. Mary's e-Safety Policy

<https://www.stmarysschoolfownhope.co.uk/importantinformation/policies/>

Government guidance for parents and carers on the closure of educational settings: section 6.3 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>

Government guidance on safeguarding and remote education during COVID-19:

<https://vimeo.com/409569640>

This policy will be reviewed in the summer term 2020.

This annex was approved by the Chair of Governors and Safeguarding Governor on :	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2020
Headteacher:	Tim Milne
Chair of Governors:	Chris Moore
Deputy Headteacher:	Demelza Gibbs
Review Date:	May 2020

## Appendix 1 - Letter to Parents, 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Parents/ Carers,

As you are aware, the school will be closed next week for all children except 'vulnerable' children and those of key workers who are not able to stay at home safely.

Over the past week, teachers have been preparing home learning books which contain a list of suggested activities and required passwords to access some online resources. Your child should have brought their book home if they have been in school. If they have not been in school then please let us know whether you are able to collect the book or you would like us to give it to someone to bring for you.

Please work through the suggested activities and give feedback to your child. School staff will be unable to mark this work. However school staff will be able to log on to online resources such as Times Table Rockstars, Prodigy Maths, spag.com, Read Theory, Tapestry etc and look at the progress that your child is making.

We understand that this situation will be difficult for everyone here at St Mary's and we encourage a flexible approach to home learning that suits your family's personal circumstances.

It is important to remember that as well as the activities we have suggested, this could be a great opportunity to allow children to follow their own interests, learn through play and take part in lots of practical learning. We are also happy for you to come up with your own home learning tasks. Throughout the closure, teachers will email further instructions and suggested tasks, depending on how long the school remains closed.

Communications may be less frequent if a teacher is ill themselves or their family are ill and during the school day when teachers are at work with the children of key workers.

Please also note that the Easter Holidays may fall within any possible school closure time, so make sure you have a break from more structured tasks.

Please note that all of the online passwords that have been given are for free activities. There is absolutely no requirement to pay for any extras which are offered on sites, as everything the children need is accessible through the free subscription.

Many thanks for your support with this.

Yours faithfully,

Mr Milne

## Appendix 2 – Letter to Parents, 16<sup>th</sup> April 2020

Dear Parents/ Carers,

I hope you all enjoyed the Easter weekend and that you are keeping well.

As we approach what should have been the beginning of the summer term, I thought I would write to keep you informed of the situation and offer some advice for home learning.

For the foreseeable future the school remains closed except to 'vulnerable' children and those of key workers who are not able to stay at home safely. If your child falls into one of these categories and you would like him/ her to attend school next week, please inform the school office by the end of Friday 17<sup>th</sup> April.

As I am sure you are aware, it is impossible at present to set a date for school to reopen fully. Therefore, we have extended our home learning scheme until at least the end of May. Many thanks to those parents who contacted the office over the last few days to share their views about home learning. We have tried to take all of them into account when planning our resources for the next few weeks. I have met 'virtually' with all the teachers this week and we have tried to produce a flexible plan that caters for all children, remembering that every family has different circumstance and can devote different amounts of time and commitment to their child's home learning.

The governors have adopted a home and online learning policy which can be read on our website and a copy of which has been attached with this letter.

It was agreed in the meeting with teachers that the main priorities for all children during the next few weeks are:-

- Reading: ask your child to read for at least 20 minutes daily. Older children can read on their own, although it is often beneficial for them to read to an adult and discuss the text and answer questions. Younger children will benefit from reading aloud to an adult. Children in Reception and Year 1 would benefit from continuing their daily phonics practice, using the recommended YouTube videos or their phonics folders.
- Times tables. A sound knowledge of the times tables facts is crucial to any maths work and these should be practised regularly to enable children to recall them at speed. Children in Year 2 and above can use the interactive computer program 'Times Tables Rock Stars' for this. Children in Year 1 can practise their number bond cards and/or their times table cards.  
Reception children should continue to concentrate on counting and ordering numbers to 20, saying one more/ less than given numbers and using quantities and objects to add and subtract two single-digit numbers.
- Handwriting. A few minutes' handwriting practice every day using the recommended resources would ensure that your child continues to make progress; sometimes this can be done through other subject areas.

In addition, we highly recommend the following activities which, as well as all having broad educational value, will enhance your child's mental health and general well-being:-

- Go on a long walk and look for signs of nature; maybe keep a wildlife journal.
- Do lots of drawing, painting, colouring, making models and taking photographs.
- Have calm reflective times during the day; say a prayer.

- Dance, skip, run and get lots of exercise.
- Help an adult in the garden; plant something and watch it grow.
- Chat with family and friends online; maybe do a virtual activity together.
- Write a letter/ card to somebody and post it; see if you get a reply!
- Make a cake or learn a new recipe; help to cook a meal for your family!
- Talk or write about how you feel; draw your feelings.
- Sing a song, play a musical instrument, find some new music to listen to.
- Do a jigsaw or play a board game with family members.
- Do some cleaning/ tidying/ organising.
- Do something kind for somebody.
- Think about all the things you have to be grateful for; maybe make a list.
- Have plenty of fresh air and a good night's sleep.

For more information on supporting your and your child's mental health during this time please go to:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

There are some parents who would like their child to complete English, maths and other academic activities each day. Your child's class teacher will provide activities for this, and the following link will explain the expected outcomes for children according to their year group:

<https://www.theschoolrun.com/home-learning-timetables-for-coronavirus-school-closures>

We would recommend that your child spends no more than an hour every day on each of English and maths activities. Some children work better with a structured timetable, and suggestions for these can also be found on the above website. Other children, however, respond better to a more flexible approach. It is important to remember that children will need plenty of breaks for food, drinks and fresh air during the day.

Following our meeting, class teachers have agreed to:-

- Send to each family an overview of suggested topics to be covered between now and the end of May; the proposed activities have been chosen either to cover new objectives which the children have not yet worked on or to revisit previously taught topics (which we do frequently in school).
- Send an email at least weekly with learning suggestions for each day of the week ahead.
- Send a daily audio file of a story/ chapter of a book with accompanying questions/ tasks (Year 2 and above).
- Send audio messages and resources so your child can hear their teacher's voice (Reception and Year 1).
- Respond to emails as frequently as possible.

In order to do all of the above and for teachers to keep track of the progress of the children in their class, every class from Year 1 upwards will be using the online package Seesaw, which Mrs Gibbs has already been using successfully with Year 6 children. Your child's teacher will



set up an account for your child during the next few days and will advise you on how to use the package. Miss Welling will continue to use Tapestry to communicate with parents and children in Violet Class.

We currently have a rota of staff working in school looking after the small number of children who are attending. This means that, every third week, your child's teacher will be working in school with other children and as such will not be able to respond to emails as frequently as during the other two weeks. The teacher will let you know when this applies to them.

We do understand that every family's situation is different and I can assure you that there will be no consequences for children who are unable to complete as much home learning as others. When school resumes, we will help children to ease back into the day-to-day routine of school life, ensuring that they work from the level they are at and start to build from there.

Finally, please watch our website every Friday for an online assembly. This is a fun way for your child to be engaged in an informal story and song and to see some of their friends from school.

Please remember that we are here to help and advise you during these difficult times. There is always someone at the end of the phone during school hours, so please do not hesitate to call. Teachers have been asked to check up on the children in their class and their families during the next few weeks, so you may get a friendly call from your child's class teacher at some point; this is nothing to worry about and is just a way of us making sure that we are supporting everyone as best we can at this time.

Look after yourselves and your families, and I will be in touch again as soon as we have any updates on the current situation.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Milne