



Diocese of Portsmouth

ST EDMUND'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

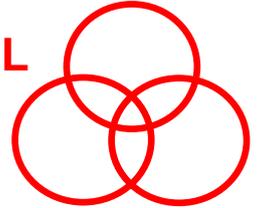
Radley Road, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 3PP

Tel: 01235 521558 Fax: 01235 532778

e-mail: office.3856@st-edmunds-rc.oxon.sch.uk

www.st-edmunds-rc.oxon.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mrs M Delany-White



30th March 2020

Dear Parents,

I write after the first week of what for most families, has been a period of home schooling their children. As a staff we are very much aware of how much you and your child are doing. We would like to thank you for all you are doing and for your wonderful messages of support, and to say we are thinking of you all. The teachers tell me how hard you and your children are all working and how much they are enjoying seeing your children's work, photos and comments on the class blog or Tapestry. Do keep communicating with the class teachers but can I also ask you to keep in mind the fact that many of the teachers are also trying to home school their own children, respond to your messages, approve over 200 entries to the class blog, plan work etc. so for the sake of their stress levels do please be patient if there is a small delay in their responding to you!

I will let you know immediately we have any news from the government regarding the reopening of the school for all children but, in the meanwhile, our arrangements with regard to school home learning are as follows:

- 30th March – 3rd April

You should have received this week's planning and resources from the class teacher by now. I am also putting the weekly planning and any useful web links or documents on the school website: <https://st-edmunds-rc.oxon.sch.uk/> You will find the new Home Learning tab on the right of the top toolbar and each class has their own home learning page now.

- 6th April – 17th April

We would like your child (and yourselves!) to enjoy a two week break from home school learning over what would have been their Easter holiday from school.

- 20th April onwards

On Monday 20th April the class teacher will email you with planning and resources for home school learning for that week. Your email will be specific to your child's class. Subsequent weekly home school learning emails will be sent to you, for as long as the present situation is in place. Do please contact the class teachers using their new class email addresses if you are not receiving the weekly planning or if you have any questions at all. Do also let the teachers know if they are providing you with too much work for your child- in their enthusiasm to help you all I suspect they are possibly overloading you, especially if you have more than one child to home school now whilst trying to do your own work from home as well. In time, the teachers will start to streamline the work they are setting but any feedback will be helpful. Remember, this situation is new for us too so we will need to adapt as we learn together.

Learning at home

We have had just a few requests for additional work for home learning. I would just like to clarify that learning takes so many different forms; it is not filling in work sheets or





Diocese of Portsmouth

ST EDMUND'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

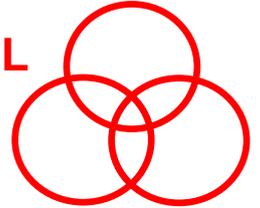
Radley Road, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 3PP

Tel: 01235 521558 Fax: 01235 532778

e-mail: office.3856@st-edmunds-rc.oxon.sch.uk

www.st-edmunds-rc.oxon.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mrs M Delany-White



completing pages of writing. Learning takes place in the home all of the time so please be confident, your own skills, talking, playing games, making junk models and having fun together are critical in learning. Remember, weather permitting, the garden could also be your classroom, bird spotting, mini beast hunting, digging and planting. Your job is primarily to keep your children safe and enjoy this time with them. Please make sure that you keep weekends school free for family time.

Many of you might worry that the children will forget their learning and fall behind – we are all in the same boat and most things they have learnt will not disappear– you are doing a great job. The work and links we have sent are a guide and a start. Set yourselves some family targets, do some family fitness activities, cook and eat together. The one thing I would encourage you all to focus on is reading – read together, out loud, read to each other, read yourself so that the children understand how important it is, enjoy books. Do take a look at Mrs Graham's post on our website with useful reading advice: <https://st-edmunds-rc.oxon.sch.uk/6307/please-keep-reading/>

Daily Prayers:

Our Portsmouth Diocese are leading daily prayers for our children and families offering all our schools as well as children at home, the opportunity to tune in at 10.15 am everyday Monday to Friday - in a thought for the day and readings and prayers especially geared for children. The 'online gathering' will last no more than 10 minutes and will be an opportunity for us all to unite together in prayer no matter how far apart we may be.

<https://mailchi.mp/portsmouthdiocese/our-schools-and-children-at-home-thought-for-the-day>

Children's Prayers:

On Wednesday 18th March Year 4 entertained us all with their wonderful Tudor assembly. At the end of their assembly they led us in prayer. Here are two of the prayers they wrote:

Dear Lord,

Please, help people that are suffering with the coronavirus and all the other poorly people in our world. Let us also pray for all of the doctors, nurses, paramedics and GPs that look after them.

Amen

Dear Lord,

Please help doctors to find a cure for the coronavirus.

Amen

Below this letter are some suggestions, adapted from a fact sheet I have been sent, which I hope might be useful for the situation you currently face.

You are all very much in our thoughts and prayers – as a community we stand with you, although working separately. Please do get in touch through the school office at





Diocese of Portsmouth

ST EDMUND'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

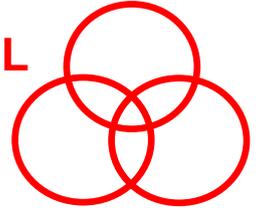
Radley Road, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 3PP

Tel: 01235 521558 Fax: 01235 532778

e-mail: office.3856@st-edmunds-rc.oxon.sch.uk

www.st-edmunds-rc.oxon.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mrs M Delany-White



office.3856@st-edmunds-rc.oxon.sch.uk should it be helpful, and in the meanwhile please keep safe and do follow all of the government's advice around self-isolating and social distancing.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Delany-White

Headteacher

Parent Fact Sheet - Suggestions to support home learning

- Be realistic about what you can do
- Providing your children with some structure at home will help them to adapt, but you need not feel you are expected to become a teacher, and your children aren't expected to learn as they do in school.
- Experiment in the first few weeks, then take stock. What's working and what isn't? Ask your children, involve them too.
- Share the load if there are two parents at home, perhaps split the day into 2-3 hour slots and take turns so you can do your own work.
- Take care of your own health and wellbeing. This will be new for your entire household, so give it time to settle.
- Keep to a timetable wherever possible.
- Create and stick to a routine if you can. This is what children are used to. For example, eat breakfast at the same time and make sure they're dressed before starting the 'school' day – avoid staying in pyjamas!
- Involve your children in setting the timetable where possible. It's a great opportunity for them to manage their own time better and it'll give them ownership.
- Check in with your children and try to keep to the timetable, but be flexible. If a task / activity is going well or they want more time, let it extend where possible.
- If you have more than one child at home, consider combining their timetables. For example, they might exercise and do maths together – see what works for your household.
- Designate a working space if possible, and at the end of the day have a clear cut-off to signal school time is over.
- Stick the timetable up on the wall so everyone knows what they should be doing when, and tick activities off throughout the day.
- Distinguish between weekdays and weekends, to separate school life and home life.
- Make time for exercise and breaks throughout the day. You could start each morning with a PE lesson at 9am with Joe Wicks:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qGKGNzNbWjU>
- If you have a garden, use it regularly. If you don't, try to get out once a day as permitted by the government (current advice is that households can be together outdoors, but 2 metres apart from others)





Diocese of Portsmouth

ST EDMUND'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

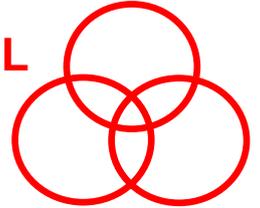
Radley Road, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 3PP

Tel: 01235 521558 Fax: 01235 532778

e-mail: office.3856@st-edmunds-rc.oxon.sch.uk

www.st-edmunds-rc.oxon.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mrs M Delany-White



- Get your children to write in a diary what they did each day – this can be a clear sign that the ‘school’ day has ended.

Below are some other suggestions of activities to keep children engaged throughout the day:

- Where you have more freedom in the timetable, make time for other activities. Add some creative time or exercise together.
- Get your children to write postcards to their grandparents or relatives.
- Ask grandparents to listen to your children read on FaceTime (or ask grandparents to read to younger children)
- Give them chores to do so they feel more responsible about the daily routine at home.
- Ask them to help you cook and bake
- Accept that they'll probably watch more TV – but that you might want to agree some screen time limits.

Supporting your mental health and that of your children:

- Talk to children and answer their questions. Ask about what they have heard about the virus and the situation so that you can correct possible misconceptions and reassure them.
- Avoid being too immersed in media coverage. Be mindful of the amount of things you are reading and watching, including social media – as this may add to worry and anxiety. Consider a few updates every day from trusted sources.
- Remember that people react differently to significant events. Some people – adults and children – may feel worried, some excited, some nothing much at all. Be reassured that different reactions are normal and okay.
- If your child seems worried, it may be good to distract them with something that takes their mind off their worries. You might also want to set aside 10-15 minutes each day for them to talk about any worries, and to reassure them.
- Remember to keep things positive and give children hope. For example, tell children that now many people are working to make this better and that even though it is serious, everyone is doing their best to help people.
- Try to keep familiar routines and set up new ones. Well-known routines in everyday life provide security and stability.
- Do nice things together and keep active. Make a plan and suggest some regular family times where you can play games, do some exercise together, or do other things that you know most of you like. Try to find a good balance between time together, and screen time.
- Keep in good contact with family and friends (via FaceTime, Skype WhatsApp etc.; following NHS guidance on ‘social contact’). This will help children connect with others and know that others are thinking about them. It will also reassure them that others are well.
- Take care of yourself and make sure you have breaks, time to relax, and ask for help from others if you need to.

