



The Priory Primary School

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Newsletter 16

Another week of remote learning is almost at a close and I hope you and your family are all well and that the challenges of this difficult time can be met with the increasingly good news that COVID vaccinations are under way, allowing us to dream of times when we may be able to return to some sense of normality.

We currently have no indication from the government regarding a possible end to the school closures, but we continue to be hopeful that this day will come sooner rather than later. In the mean time, let me be the first to say how well you are doing to support your children. The teachers have been blown away by the work and learning demonstrated on Seesaw over the last 3 weeks. Following my check in with the offsite staff this week, I have been regaled with so many stories of how children are demonstrating a great 'can do' attitude whilst learning from home - taking on activities in clever and unique ways.

Throughout this process, I have kept the focus of home learning as one of daily engagement - it continues to be essential that children have the opportunity to engage in the learning provided from school and we will continue to contact parents if we lose track of how the children are doing. However all the staff recognise how important it is to find that unique balance that works for your family. Whilst some families will have the capacity to complete every task we set, others will struggle with the first subject. Some families will have difficulties keeping to the timetable, others may need to supplement an additional activity as their children finish a task too quickly. These sorts of personalisations and circumstances are being felt by parents across the country at this point. As I stated in lockdown 1 last year, the most important thing is to try to enjoy the process as much as possible - to not get stressed or worried if your child is not able / motivated to stay focused and complete each aspect. The key is perseverance and routine, but there will be days when it is better to cut your loses and just do something fun. We will all get to this point and we totally understand and accept this. The school's overarching ambition during this time of lockdown is to keep the children learning, to provide the best remote education we can and to ensure that when the children return to school that any possible learning gaps are as small as possible.

Overleaf I have shared ten top tips for the lockdown remote learning - not that I am the expert, but having primary aged children myself and having tried to support them as best I could - I certainly know the challenges that you all face. Many of you will have even better tips that have worked for your family - please do share them with your community and utilise support groups such as through social media <https://www.facebook.com/groups/871176893326326/> - which could be a great source of support.

Ten Top Tips For Lockdown Remote Learning

- 1) Let your child use a pair of headphones for the videos and live sessions - this is especially important if you have more than one child at the school.
- 2) Make the timetable work for you. We have included a timetable in this lockdown to allow the staff to support different subjects - but a timetable doesn't always work - some children need longer on certain subjects. Set your own timetable and try to stick to it. Also remember we have opted to make videos with your teachers so that you can always go back to finish or review things on a different day.
- 3) Create a family reward scheme and stick to it. Its better to be overly positive (especially at first), when it works your child will be really motivated.
- 4) Where possible prepare the materials for the lesson the night before - it is possible to download all of the plans and resources (print where required) in advance as they are all posted for the entire week. Nothing is harder than trying to figure out what your child is doing in the lesson whilst getting them started at the same time.
- 5) Make the live sessions work for you. These live sessions are your child's link with the class teacher, so do not just think of them as only for children who are struggling with that day's work. Teachers will gladly support or reinforce an activity from earlier in the week, if you missed the session the day before. Equally, your child may just want to read or showcase their work for some instant feedback.
- 6) Prioritise - Ideally your child will do it all. But this is not always possible. English and Maths activities should always be a priority, but at times it may be worth a strategic retreat and take some time to do an afternoon Seesaw activity instead - these activities are more fluid and broad ranging.
- 7) Consider screen time - too much and you are going to have grumpy kids, find the balance that suits you. Do not forget TV and computer games add to the screen time and can make a situation worse - even if you do get those precious few minutes of downtime.
- 8) Supplement the remote provision with other great online materials - the BBC have some fabulous home learning for all age groups at the moment.
- 9) Recognise your own limits - as long as you continue with a 'daily - give it a go' mentality, there may be times and certain activities that stretch you to your limits as well. Please remember stress and learning rarely go well together.
- 10) MOST IMPORTANTLY - whilst these tips are practical in nature - if they are not helping and your child is really struggling to engage, or their mental wellbeing is really becoming an issue - please contact the school. We are still very much here to support as best we can and find possible solutions to help, be this the loan of a device, some additional (remote) small group support, a phone call to your child from our ELSA (Mrs West), the class teacher, Mrs Adams or myself, we can work with you to try and get you the support required to make a difference.

Whole School Assembly

Now that the live sessions and class assemblies are all up and running, I will start to lead a whole school assembly once a week on a Friday at 2.30pm.

Each week there will be a theme, an activity and some celebrations of great learning.

Do click on the link below each Friday @ 2.30pm (starting on Friday 29th) to allow your children to join the assembly:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85797750886?pwd=Mk0zRU8zaW1uVDV4WVBzMUN2U1czQT09>

Meeting ID: 857 9775 0886

Passcode: 7RwBK9

Food Drive / Supporting the Local Community

A huge thank you to all of those families who have donated to our food drive appeal via the PTA website. We have currently raised £154.84 - which is amazing and will go to help local families ensure they have enough food at this difficult time. Thank you.

Our appeal will continue so do feel free to continue donating via the PTA website:

<https://www.priorypta.co.uk/community-food-collection>

All money raised through the PTA website will be used to purchase fresh and tinned goods for families in our local community, however all extra funds will be donated to the local food bank in order to spread your generosity to the wider community.

