

**Shirley Infant School**

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**Every Child, Every Chance, Every Day**

**Shirley Junior School**



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### **Shirley Schools Closure**

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the summer term! I hope you have all managed to take a bit of a break and enjoy some family time over Easter. It has been fantastic to see our community spreading positivity in their Citizenship challenge over the break - look at the spread of colour!

<https://www.shirleyjuniorschool.org/news/?pid=6&nid=1&storyid=18>

We are starting this term in a very different way than we ever have before! Thank you for your feedback about Home Learning. I am sure you can appreciate that we as teachers are learning to do this in a very different way while at home with our own family pressures. We have made a few changes to the home learning and will continue to review it, endeavouring to make it as accessible as possible for the individual needs of all our families. Moving forward, all learning will be focussed on revising areas of the curriculum that have already been taught at school. We will try to ensure one document for literacy and one for maths that is printable. There may also be powerpoints or links to websites to aid the children's learning.

We have also added individual subject learning activities that your child/children may choose to do. These activities are on the front Home learning page and are suitable for any year group. So if you have siblings that would like to learn together please feel free to select from here.

<https://www.shirleyjuniorschool.org/page/?title=Home+Learning&pid=30>

We encourage all pupils to complete the literacy and maths tasks set by their teachers as well as choosing project tasks or other curriculum tasks to help them fill their days. Do as much or as little of this as you feel is right for your child.

We have put together our answers to a list of Frequently Asked Questions, we hope you will find these helpful. If you have any further feedback about learning please can you pass these to your class rep rather than the individual teachers.

Hoping that this finds you all well, we all miss seeing the children and hope that we will get to see them all again soon. Stay safe.

Yours sincerely,

Annette Hixon, Jo Tearle & Anne Booth

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **General**

#### **Q: How can I contact the school?**

A: Please use the [teachers@shirleyschools.co.uk](mailto:teachers@shirleyschools.co.uk) email address for any general or learning-related queries. These will get forwarded to the appropriate teacher.

Children's work may be shared **once a week** to the specific year group email address (eg [Y4teachers@shirleyschools.co.uk](mailto:Y4teachers@shirleyschools.co.uk)) - please send one email only, with a maximum of 3 pieces of learning that your child has enjoyed or is proud of.

#### **Q: How long are schools expecting to close for? How will we know when the school will be opened?**

A: We have not been given any guidelines, but we expect it to be at least until mid-May going by statements from the government, and likely to be a good while longer. When schools are told by the government that they are allowed to reopen, we will contact all parents to let them know.

#### **Q: What if my status changes to become a key worker (returning nurse etc)? Or if my financial status changes? Will we be eligible for the food hamper for lunch?**

A: In this circumstance, email us and we will make arrangements with you.

#### **Q: How will children catch up when schools reopen?**

A: Identifying gaps in children's knowledge, skills and understanding, and then teaching to move children on, is what teachers are trained to do. They do it every day in every lesson. This situation is no different apart from there will most likely be a wider range of gaps given that everybody's home situation is different. We will plan how to move forward, and where to start from, when we know more about when we are likely to reopen - but it is still essentially the same circumstance that teachers deal with every day and are experts at catering for

#### **Q: How will transition into a new year group be handled, if schools remain shut until September?**

A: We will be thinking about this carefully, and will communicate with you about it nearer the time if it looks likely. There are several options and as a school we need to decide what will be the right way forward for our children so that emotionally they feel as secure as possible in this unusual situation.

### **Home learning: how on earth do we do it?**

#### **How do I do this? Do I need to set up the day as it would be in school? Should children be doing 6 hours of learning every day?**

First of all, there is no need for you to run the day as if the children are in school. As a wise headteacher recently posted on social media - this is not homeschooling. This is an unprecedented emergency situation impacting the whole world. This current situation is, at best, distance learning. In reality, none of us really know what we're doing and what's right and wrong here!

We are all anxious right now, and kids pick up on that, so they will be anxious too. Although they might have loved the idea of being off school, the restrictive reality is probably setting in pretty fast. They are likely to communicate their anxiety through their behaviour, so you are likely to see a higher-than-normal amount of emotional outbursts and challenging behaviour. And you may feel like exhibiting some of that yourself as well! This is completely normal under such unknown and strange circumstances – be kind to yourself. We will be sharing wellbeing resources in the home-learning section of the website because yours and your children's mental and emotional wellbeing is by far the most important thing right now.

What kids mainly need right now is to feel comforted and loved and to feel like it's all going to be ok. And that might mean that you temporarily abandon your home-learning ideals and just spend time with your kids. Play outside and go on (daily exercise) walks. Bake cookies, paint pictures, play board games, do jigsaws, watch movies. Do a science experiment together or find virtual field trips of the zoo. Read a book together as a family. Build a fort. Do some imaginative free-play, following their lead. Or stick them in front of the TV/iPad with a film or documentary while you get on with some work. If you are working too, you can certainly have activities where your child learns, but your focus is your job, and survival. Don't try to be a superhero.

That said, structure generally helps children, especially the more anxious ones, so if you can, you might want to have a rough rhythm to the day – PE (Joe Wicks on Youtube is excellent), some maths and english, a snack, some project, some art/lego/baking – but this is a very rough guide and you know your kids best. They will learn through whatever they are doing. Don't forget that we spend time in school reading for pleasure, having playtime, doing PE, having assemblies, having circle times, not to mention art, music, cooking etc – the actual proportion of sit-down learning is not that high over the week, and you are not aiming to replicate school anyway. It's not worth getting into fights with your kids because they don't want to do maths, or getting wound up and worried when they are resisting the learning. Give up for the day and do something fun and connecting instead, or watch a favourite film.

We will be updating our website every Friday with maths, english and topic activities for you to use if they are useful. BUT - **we do not want this to cause you to feel stressed, overwhelmed or under pressure.** Hands-on maths in the kitchen, and free-choice writing is just as valuable. If you are also working from home then please do not feel pressured to do all of it – or even any of it. If you have more than one child in different year groups and you think it might work better, they could do the same activities rather than different ones for each child.

Children might also like to do a self-led learning project, if they are independent enough – choose a topic that interests them and help them come up with some questions or some areas within that topic that they could find out about. Get them researching in a book or online and putting together something to present to you or the whole family – a powerpoint, a talk, a project book, a documentary.

### **Are parents now in charge of the progress that the children make?**

No, absolutely not. And please don't worry about them regressing. Every single kid is in this boat and they all will be ok. Children are resilient – more so than adults, often! When we are back in the classroom, we will all course-correct and meet them where they are - it's what we do every day anyway! Your child will not fall behind. This is all revision and reminder work to keep the knowledge and skills in their heads over this enforced break. They will cover all of this again, multiple times, once they are back in school.

### **How will I know if my child's learning is correct or if they have completed it to a high enough standard?**

Teachers will include answers to the questions set, where practical. Sometimes though, you might not know. That's OK. Please don't get hung up on standards (unless you have a child who responds well to that). They will pick things up quickly once they are back in school again.

Finally - you are doing enough. You are loving your kids and supporting them through a difficult time. Remember to look after yourself, because minimising your own stress is absolutely vital in a time like this for your own mental health. Put on your own oxygen mask first, and make sure you keep putting it on every day!

## Any guidance about what to do when?

Teachers will be uploading the week's work on a Friday so you can look over the weekend at the week's suggested learning and print any resources you would like to.. You do not need to do each subject every day, so do not pressurise yourself to do this, and you do not need to print resources off, we are trying to make Word or Powerpoint versions of most of them so they can be completed on the computer.

There is a very basic suggested timetable on the website, we are very aware that everybody's situation is different therefore we do not want to dictate how you approach your days. That said, the DFE have published some guidance that you could follow if you find it helpful (or stay well away from if it would cause your family stress!):

Guidance on helping primary school aged children learn at home can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-primary-school-children-continue-their-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

Guidance on helping children with special educational needs and disabilities learn at home can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-children-with-send-continue-their-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

Guidance on helping children aged 2 to 4 learn at home can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-children-aged-2-to-4-to-learn-at-home-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

## Home learning: communication and technical information

### Q: How is new home learning being shared?

A: Weekly maths and english learning will be uploaded to the Pupils -> Home Learning section of the website on a Friday for the following week (*this is a change - for the week beginning 27th April teachers will do their best to get work up early but it may still go up on the Monday morning. From then on though, learning for each week will be uploaded on the Friday of the previous week, following lots of parent requests*). Project learning will also continue with children choosing 3 activities a week from a grid of learning, and resources to support learning can also be found in this section.



Home learning is in the **Pupils** tab.

A drop down menu allows you to find your year group and access recommended resources.

### Q: Will we be able to contact teachers or send work in?

A: Teachers are sending a Marvellous Me message each week to say hello. Parents can contact the school using the info@ email for general enquiries about learning, and the [Yxteachers@shirleyschools.co.uk](mailto:Yxteachers@shirleyschools.co.uk) email for sending in learning to celebrate (replace x with your year group number so Y3teachers@... for Year 3, etc). You are welcome to email in **one** piece of learning your child is proud of, to share with their teacher, each week.

## **Home learning: general**

### **Q: Can we have some reading recommendations?**

A: The 100 Book Challenge from your planners are a great place to start, you can also find these on the website under Pupils -> Home Learning -> English

## **Home learning: financial**

### **Q: Can parents get help with printing and/ or home learning supplies?**

A: We are able to supply printed home learning packs, exercise books, pencils and handwriting pens to parents of children who are eligible for Pupil Premium or who are otherwise struggling with finances or access to a printer. These can be collected from the school office. Please note that lots of the learning is via Powerpoint or editable Word document so can be done on a screen, should you wish to do that.

## **Year 6**

### **Q: How will they be assessed?**

A: Children will be given an assessment by their class teacher, based on their most recent work and the teacher's knowledge of their approach in class..

### **Q: Will year 6 have time together before secondary school? How will they say goodbye to SJS?**

A: As Year 6 teachers, we are not ready to say goodbye to the children yet. The Year 6 teachers, as a team, have agreed to organise an end-of-year ball where children will be able to take part in celebrations such as shirt signing, once it is safe to do so, even if this is once they have already started secondary school. The team will be in contact with parents about this when it is possible to start organising this.