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Dear Parents and Carers,

Re. Home Learning

Lots of people are feeling stressed, overwhelmed and under pressure by everything that's happening. This includes the work being sent home for your child. I wanted to share the school's perspective on it all and I hope this will help you and your child.

A few points to note first:

- 1) This is not home-schooling. This is an unprecedented emergency situation impacting on the whole world. In terms of keeping a perspective on this, home-schooling is a choice, which is considered, planned for and most importantly, you are your child's school teacher in whatever form you choose. This current situation we find ourselves in is, at best, distance learning. In reality, it's everyone trying to make sense of what should and should not be done, because these are extremely challenging times both professionally and personally.
- 2) You are, and always have been, your child's primary educator. If you decide that your child isn't going to engage with anything sent home or uploaded onto the school website, and is going to spend the entire period playing, or baking, or watching TV, then that is your choice. That is your right. There is nothing to stress or feel guilty about.
- 3) Schools are still being guided by what should or should not be done. They had the very minimum notice and a fraction of the preparation time needed to be as prepared as they would have liked to have been for the children.
- 4) It is virtually impossible to facilitate distance learning with a primary aged child and work from home at the same time. If you're trying to do that, you need to re-think how everything can be achieved in reality and set realistic goals! You can certainly have activities where your child learns, but your focus is your job, and survival. Again, unprecedented times.

Here are a few FAQs:

- My school has sent home lots of physical work. Pages and pages, hours and hours. How am I supposed to get through it all?!

You're not, don't try. Your child's teacher spent a couple of hours quickly gathering things to send home in order to do their best and send some appropriate work home (with answers where necessary to help you see how well your child is doing). It's not a competition, or a race, and your parenting will not be judged by how much written work your child has completed.



- *Someone in my child's class has done everything and we've barely started. Will they fall behind?*

Even if everything were equal in terms of support, time and number of children (which it's not) all children learn at different rates. In the class there's a wide range of levels in all subjects, there's different paces and there are many children working on differentiated levels of work. It's almost impossible for teachers to differentiate individually at the moment.

Your child will not fall behind. Much of the work set will be revision and reminder work so the children can practice what they know and become fluent in recall. If children could all learn new concepts without specific teaching, we wouldn't need teachers. They will cover all of this again, multiple times, when they return to school so don't worry.

- *I'm not doing any work with my children. All they're doing is building Lego, cooking and playing.*

All of this is learning and it is very valuable learning. Give yourself and them a break. Make time to talk whilst completing activities like these – your child needs reassurance and an opportunity to ask questions so they can feel safe in these uncertain times. There are links on the school website (children tab – mindfulness and wellbeing) that can support you with talking to your child about Coronavirus.

- *How can I get three different lots of work done with 3 different children of different ages?*

You can't, stop trying. If they're old enough, try to get them to do little bits independently. Otherwise try to do something they can all engage with, reading a story together, some free writing, baking etc.

- *So what's the bare minimum you'd expect?*

During these unprecedented times we are currently experiencing, the bare minimum is to be there for each other; to be kind to yourself and to others; and to talk with one another. These are times to share and care in whatever shape or form this may take. It's a time for family.

What is the ideal for the children in our school?

- A bit of **reading** every day (independent or to them or via audiobook etc)
- Some free **writing** now and then, ideas will be shared weekly on the school website (perhaps keep a diary – we are making history)
- Practical hands on **maths**, for example when you are cooking, cleaning, outside, or playing some maths games (physical or online)
- **Physical Exercise** everyday
- Some **art/music** where possible through the week (ideas are shared in the six steps to success homework on the school website)
- **Challenge!** Encouraging independent work on a project of your own choosing based on your interests (researching using books or kiddle.com online and putting together something to present to the family)

You are doing enough. You are loving your children and supporting them through a difficult time. Look after yourself. Minimising stress is absolutely vital in a time like this for mental health. Don't let this be something that stresses you. Only you can control that by accepting it is within your control to do so: you are the primary educator and this is all your call. Our website signposts you to some great sites for wellbeing, so please explore them and stay safe!

Kindest regards



All the staff at Thornton Primary School