

Thursday, 18th March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

We want to ensure that all children can continue their learning during this very challenging time period as we know this will ultimately support them for when they are able to return to school.

For all children not in school, your child's usual class teacher will be setting work via Class Charts throughout the period of school closure. As we do not know how long the partial school closure will last for, I wanted to outline how the school will be setting work and what we ask parents and carers to do in support of this.

We have asked teachers to post little and often rather than setting in bulk as we don't want children to become overwhelmed. This means that they will ensure that work is available on the day that a student would ordinarily have their lesson. Teachers will be available between the hours of 8.30am-4.00pm Monday to Friday to respond to emails from students or parents (an email list is included within this pack). Guidance for logging in to Class Charts and other online platforms can be found on the front page of our website, www.poltairschool.co.uk We wish to encourage interaction between teachers and students as we know this is likely to help reduce anxieties for them. However, please can we ask that you monitor this and ensure that your son/daughter remember that emails should have a formal tone.

Included within this pack is:

1. Staff email addresses
2. Suggestions for keeping children active
3. Guidance on who to contact for support if you have safeguarding concerns
4. Blank reward charts
5. Beating Boredom Bingo Grid

Below are suggestions for supporting you at home in trying to maintain a positive working atmosphere. We know that this time period is challenging for everyone but there are things that can be done to help this.

Keeping a routine to learning

Children benefit from routine and structure. This can be much more difficult to achieve in the home, so we wanted to give some advice to help you to do this:

1. Try to keep a set 'wake up' time. It might not need to be as early as it would be for school but avoid allowing long lie ins as it can cause lethargy and impact on mental health over long periods of time.
2. Identify a space in the house where work should be completed. Ideally, this would be at a table.
3. Set realistic work periods. Whilst sticking to a school timetable of 75-minute periods may be unrealistic, having blocks of 'learning time' is realistic by introducing this from the outset of the school closure.

4. It is sensible for students to stick to the sequence of their timetable so that they have a pattern that they are familiar with.
5. Show an interest in what the children are learning. Ask them questions, check the quality of their work to make sure that work is being well presented and is as detailed as possible.
6. Agree rewards for completing work. Included in this pack are some blank reward charts that you might find helpful. Giving children an incentive such as- 2 hours of learning for 30 minutes of screen time can be a good 'carrot'. The important thing is to work with your child to agree what would be a realistic motivator for them.
7. Encourage further reading and research around the topics being set. Teachers will be directing children to learning activities, but this doesn't mean that they can't go further and develop their knowledge more.

Many staff will be setting work via platforms such as Maths Watch or Seneca Learning. These platforms allow staff to check on completion so that they can guide next steps in learning. We expect parents and carers to be supportive of this and to ensure that your child tries their very best to complete the work set.

Keeping Active

It is important that children continue to get some form of exercise as this helps both their physical and mental health. With prolonged periods of time indoors, this can be a real challenge. Included within this pack are suggestions for this from Mr Adams, Curriculum Team Leader for PE.

This link is to further workouts on YouTube that have been created specifically for children by Joe Wicks, the Body Coach.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d3LPrhIOv-w>

It is also helpful to consider introducing activities that help with mindfulness and relaxation. There are many videos that can help with this, but a suggestion is included: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vYQy8-7Ut1E>

Activities to do together

Long periods of time at home are almost certainly going to lead to boredom and we know this is when people become irritable and tempers can flare. There are a range of activities online that can be used to prevent or tackle boredom which require limited resources. Please look at the following for suggestions:

https://www.jamesdysonfoundation.co.uk/content/dam/pdf/JDF_with%20cover%20challenge-cards_DIGITAL.pdf

<https://feelslikehomeblog.com/2018/06/the-ultimate-list-of-things-for-kids-to-do-when-theyre-bored-200-ideas-printable/>

How about using the included bingo grid to tick off activities during the time children are not able to attend school- we will give prizes for the best!

What if I need to contact someone for support/advice?

Miss Owens, our Designated Safeguarding Lead, has included guidance for contacting our pastoral team for advice and guidance during this time period as well as contacts for external support. Please make use of these if you need them as they are there to help you.

We are confident that by working together, we can get through this very challenging time.

Yours Sincerely,



Claire White
Deputy Headteacher