

COVID 19: supporting learning and development during the lockdown

As parents settle into new ways of working, learning and just being, I thought you might appreciate some guidance on how you can support home learning for your children at this unusual and difficult time.

Guidance to create a positive home learning environment

Be realistic about what you can do! You're not expected to become teachers and your children aren't expected to learn in the same way as they do in school. Simply providing your children with some structure at home will help them to adapt. Use the tips below to help you make this work for your household.

- Share the load if there are two parents at home. 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. Take a look at the links at the end of this newsletter for some advice on mental health and wellbeing.
- 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! Stick the timetable up on the wall so everyone knows what they should be doing when, and tick activities off throughout the day
- 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 they are finding a task challenging or frustrating they can email or ask their teacher a question in teams, leave the task and come back to it later.
- 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

- Distinguish between weekdays and weekends and holidays, to separate school life and home life. At weekends and in the holidays make time for other family activities as well as giving children their own time and space.

Free Learning opportunities (in addition to what Avanti is providing)

You may have seen that many social media feeds are periodically sharing activities and free learning opportunities, some of which are listed below.

Oak National Academy

This is a new collection of high-quality lessons and online resources. Backed by the Government, it has been created in response to the coronavirus lockdown. The online classroom offers free access to great teachers, delivering video lessons, quizzes and worksheets. Available for both primary and secondary levels, it covers a range of subjects. All of the lessons are ordered so your child can learn along a clear plan.

<https://www.thenational.academy/information-for-parents-pupils/>

BBC Bitesize

Daily lessons are here! The BBC has at least three new lessons every weekday, with videos, activities and more.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize>

The National Theatre

The National Theatre is streaming full length plays for free every Thursday, these are available for 7 days following too:

<https://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/>

The Royal Shakespeare Company

The Royal Shakespeare Company has released a wide range of resources, videos and access to live performances on their website.

<https://www.rsc.org.uk/news/watch-rsc-shows-from-home>

Keeping healthy and keeping in touch

You may find the parents' guide to coping with school closures helpful – see link below. This website provides helpful tips and advice for parents to support their children academically as well as look after their physical and mental health.

www.theparentsguideto.co.uk/coronavirus

For guidance on supporting your own mental health and that of your children the 'Mind' has a useful section on its website about the coronavirus and your wellbeing:

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>

While schools are closed, staff remain available to support and provide advice and guidance for all our students. Please do remember you can get in touch if you need to. Your first port of call should be an email to your child's tutor or subject teacher.

I hope all our families are managing to stay safe and well, while keeping up to date and following the advice on how to limit the spread of COVID-19.

Mike Ion
AST Education Director