

Penllergaer Primary School

Learning at home

Sally Holland – (Children’s Commissioner for Wales) – promotes ‘CALM’

Anxiety spreads, so does calm. So try to spread ‘calm’ across homes up and down the country.

C - create new routines and rituals,

A - ask a grown up, don't let worries stay in your head, share emotions

L - do lovely things and laugh. You can't be anxious and laugh at the same time.

M - make the most of this opportunity

Aims:

- enjoyment
- supporting skills development
- supporting independent learning
- supporting learner resilience and perseverance
- developing learners’ creative, investigative, and collaborative skills.
- supporting well-being and keeping learners healthy
- supporting family interaction and empowering parents

Main Messages:

- Penllergaer Primary endeavours to convey a sense of calmness and proportionality. We are not driving a culture of competition and one-upmanship.
- Every child’s home and family dynamic is different. It is crucial to understand this. (single parents, key worker children, socially disadvantaged children, children with large numbers of siblings living in small homes, children in homes where there is domestic abuse, children who care for parents or relatives, children with no access to internet, children with no access to a garden or open space, limited or no access to internet or suitable devices to complete online tasks, children/families who have experienced unemployment, hardship or bereavement through Covid-19 are but a few examples and within this there are subsets or even children who face multiple challenges). Any continuation of learning guidance must not place additional stress on families that are already facing difficult times.
- The key priority at this time is to support the health and wellbeing of children and their families. A basic routine of learning, activity and play, appropriate to the needs and context of each child and family, can support them to stay physically and mentally healthy in these most unusual of times.
- School days start at 8.50am and finish at 3:20pm, but not all that time is spent ‘learning’ in formal lessons – playtimes, lunchtimes and assembly fall between these times, so don’t think you have to do ‘school’ for five to six hours a day!
- Families might consider establishing routines that include, times to learn, play, exercise, eat, rest and sleep and where possible communicate with friends and peers (digitally). The amount of time devoted to each should be driven by the needs of the child and the family and not by the pursuit of an unrealistic academic timetable. The family home is not school and parents are not expected to take the place of teachers.
- Slow down home learning. The wellbeing of the whole family is paramount. Children’s education will not suffer in the long run. Concentrate on creating and doing activities together. This is an opportunity to make use of valuable time together so make the most of it and have fun!

- In any learning environment, encouragement and praise for effort are crucial in setting a positive tone. Try to make things fun where possible and mix things up. There are times for children to work alone and times when they will enjoy shared activities. The effort, participation and enjoyment should be the focus.
- It is appropriate to revisit things that children already know, to practice and refine skills in different contexts.
- Regular contact is very important to keep children a part of the school community. Communication is via E-mail (home and school) acknowledging that there may not be an immediate response. Phone calls may also be necessary to some homes.
- Teachers will not give feedback on all pieces of work.
- Social media and the digital world have much to offer but it can bring unnecessary stress, for example by making families feel 'inferior' because of what they haven't done in comparison with others. This is not helpful.
- Weekly tasks have been designed to offer a variety of activities such as model making, experimenting, discovering, researching, reading, singing, oral story-telling and handwritten tasks.
- The activities set should give children and families valuable time together to talk, share and create things. Teachers have planned tasks that provide learners with opportunities to express themselves in different ways eg models, drawing, writing, mindmaps, videoing, pwerpoints etc. Many activities are designed to be completed with resources that can easily be found in most homes.
- Penllergaer Primary will support families with technological devices and guidance for using platforms. Many activities can be done without the need for ICT or wifi connection.