

Penllergaer Primary School

What can parents do to support their children's home learning?

- Create space – learning takes place everywhere, indoors, outdoors
- Make it positive
- Follow your child's interests – jointly develop a daily routine/activity timetable
- Let them make mistakes
- Give them time to complete activities – there's no rush
- Allow pupils to work independently, with siblings, or collaborate via IT
- Share activities, discuss as a family what has been achieved
- Have fun and celebrate
- Model learning behaviours such as reading for pleasure, talking about what you have read or showing children how you 'find out' about things

Additional suggestions depending on your circumstances

- Exercise outside: if possible, go out and exercise as a household, for one hour a day ensuring all family members keep the appropriate social distance from others not part of the household
- Exercise inside: Joe Wicks' morning exercise routines have been popular, but there are other activities and using them in combination will keep whole bodies active over the week. Try: yoga-style stretches for good posture, Pilates movements
- Get things done: make sure you finish what you have set out to do each day, however, at the start of the day don't set yourself unachievable tasks. Make sure you allow time for the inevitable distractions of everyone being at home together.
- Give each other space: make sure everyone has the opportunity to spend some time in only their own company
- Practice mindfulness: take time to notice what is happening in your environment, without judging. Aim to become more self-aware, choose how you respond to your thoughts and feelings, manage difficult/unhelpful thoughts and be kinder to yourself. Take a moment to breathe deeply and slowly before 'getting on with it'.
- Learn about hygge: a Danish concept (pronounced hoo-ga), aiming to create a warm atmosphere and enjoying the good things in life with good people
<https://www.visitdenmark.com/denmark/highlights/hygge/what-hygge>
- Keep in touch with the outside world – not just work! Maintaining relationships with families and friends are vital during this time, how else are you going to plan the celebrations when all this is over?
- Keep routines and structures as close to normal as you can
- Wash your hands regularly: not only will it help to prevent Coronavirus, you also feel like you are doing something positive during this crisis, just as staying at home is doing.
- Ration the use of social media and news updates, they can overwhelm, add to stress levels and rob us of time
- See this an opportunity to bond as a family or learn a new skill
- Learn from the experience: it's okay to change things as you go along, learning work works and doesn't work for you as a family unit.

Speaking and listening

Over time, schools are noticing that their pupils are starting with lower and lower speaking skills. This is largely because sociality is changing as we communicate more frequently via smartphones and tablets through social media platforms. Wouldn't it be nice to re-engage with the art of conversation and enjoy each other's company? Success during this time is

not going to be based around who did the best activities and shared them on Facebook, but in the months and years from now when families reminisce, 'do you remember that time on lock-down when we.....it was great!'

Rules for talking:

- Everyone is equal: children should be seen *and* heard. This means we listen to what each other is saying and think about it, not just listen and wait until we can say what we want to say anyway, which may no longer be relevant as the conversation moves naturally along.
- Take turns! Respect each other
- Speak clearly and have good posture when talking – it helps
- Give eye contact
- Support views with more information and explanation
- Have respect for what the speaker is saying
- Correct mistakes sensitively
- Give praise for efforts
- Try and use new words.

Some ideas that can be repeated over and over:

- New words – get inspiration from the news, a book you a reading, website explored or simply find one in the dictionary, weave it into you conversations around the table or sitting together on the sofa
- Talk about what is happening in the news in a non-frightening and informative way, chose someone to become an expert.
- Create your own family news for the day – what has everyone been up to? What have you learned? Is there any news from other households who are family or friends? Use the time to think about using a more formal voice, just like the news readers and journalists do. Record mini news reports for all the family to watch later.
- Create your own cooking programme. Record yourself making a meal, who says Nigella or Jamie Oliver should have all the fun? Short videos like this are all over Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest these days.
- Make a documentary, such as a wildlife one of the creatures in your garden or plant pots. Even the life of your neighbour's nose cat!
- Entertain the family with some comedy or learn a magic trick to perform.
- Write a playscript and act it out in front of the rest of the family. Record it and share with friends and family who are missing your company.
- Chose an image to talk about. It could be a work of art (imagine talking about what all the people are doing in a Lowry?) or a family photo of a memorable time. Talk about it. Explore feelings. Share.
- Start to record your family tree.
- Use a conversation starter, such as, would you rather be able to fly or be invisible? There are lots examples of different conversation starters on the internet or you could make up your own.
- Think about 'big questions' and make time to research the answers and present findings to the family. This can be extended by turning it into a family version of 'would I lie to you' and among the correct explanation include some 'red herrings' and see if family members can fish them out.

Garden and kitchen science

- Rainbow flowers – pick some daisies, place them in separate glasses of water dyed with different food colourings and they will soon change colour. Explore the science and talk about how plants 'drink' water

- Be patient – start a compost bin from uncooked kitchen scraps and peelings and add some worms. Research what will happen and why
- Identify birds and butterflies that fly into your garden or nearby if you live in a flat
- Identify trees nearby and learn how they will spread their seeds
- Find how long your intestines are, measure a piece of string to that size and stretch it out along your garden – what is it bigger than? Smaller than? How high would it be? Think about what else you could explore
- Play with bubbles outside – how can you make the bubble bigger? Which way do they blow? Why?
- Look for insects in the garden – ladybirds, caterpillars etc and draw them
- Make artworks out of items gathered from the garden and take a photo of your finished product. Remember to wash your hands and not to touch your face
- Make a human sundial by plotting the shadows from the same spot every hour. Learn that the Earth moves around the sun even though it looks like the sun moves across the sky. Remember to never, ever look directly at the sun
- Place a range of different items in a muffin pan, such as piece of chocolate, wax candle, rubber, cheese, butter etc, put it out in the sun and see what melts and at what speed
- Make or download a nature hunt bingo card and explore in your garden or when on permitted family exercise time
- Using foil to make a channel for a 'river', experiment and make a dam. Explore what works best and why?
- Make a bug hotel and survey your guests
- Take a bowl of water outside and investigate what floats and what sinks. What have you learned? Can you make a boat? How many items can it hold before it sinks? How many blocks (wooden, lego) does it take to sink? Don't forget to predict and explain!

Routines and timetables

All family members could sit together and negotiate the family timetable for them, for example:

- Wash hands
- Start the day with breakfast – what are you having? Who will lay the table? Who will prepare it all? Who will help? Will you have a waiter/waitress? Make it fun, fair and use the time to talk and plan your snacks and meals for the rest of the day
- Wash hands
- Activity time – have time set aside for morning learning to take place alongside any adult work commitments. Have a balance of activities that are adult led and independent for the child.
- Wash hands
- Snack time – everybody needs a break from screens and to move around. Use the time to talk. What snack are you having? Who is getting it ready? Who is clearing away today? Make sure you move about, go outside in the garden, if you can.
- Wash hands
- Activity time
- Wash hands
- Lunchtime – like snack time, who is doing what? Work as a team. Take time to enjoy what you are eating. Talk about it. Chew it slowly and savour – you finally have the time for that!
- Wash hands
- Afternoon activity time – just as the morning, don't forget to take a break, have snack or drink together.

- Wash hands
- 'Home time' establish a time when 'work' is over and everyone can relax.
- Wash hands

Talk about what needs to be done and what everybody would like and strike a balance. Make sure you all agree on the rules of the house, the importance of good manners, such as taking turns, listening to each other, respecting others. During this time the importance of good hygiene and handwashing should be a very high priority.

The timetable can be written down on paper and displayed for everyone to see. Write on it as you go along, modify and change things together as it is not set in stone. Make it visual with pictures and diagrams so everybody can follow it. A visual timetable is especially important to include family members who are younger or those with special needs, such as autism.

Establish 'work spaces' in your home if you can, that way they can be packed away or door closed on them at the end of 'work' time, therefore ending that part of the day and maintaining some sort of 'home' time feeling.

Incorporate evening meal times into the routine. Take turns choosing the meal, make it together and set up the table nicely if you can to make it a bit more special now its 'home' time. Talk about what you have done today and what is happening tomorrow.