



ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
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Dear Parents,

Thank you for your co-operation, prayers and support over the last very challenging week. It is with great sadness that we close the school today, but I understand that this is the safest and best option for all. We will miss the children but we hope that we can return before the end of the Summer Term.

We will have a number of children in school next week who fall into the category of vulnerable or key workers' children. Can I again please stress that the best option is to **keep your child at home**, unless you have no other possible form of childcare. If you are working from home, then your child should be with you - this is because we need to minimise risk and reduce the spread of infection across the children we will have in school and our staff.

I want to thank my brilliant team of staff who have helped keep the children calm and reassured over the last few weeks. They have been amazing, pulling together, preparing and distributing work for home and the weeks ahead. They will continue to be working in school to support the children - I am so grateful to them. Please remember that this will pass and although the outlook feels uncertain and unknown, anything is possible with God. "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future," Jeremiah 29:11.

In the meantime, here are some top tips for a positive day of learning and time at home:

1. Routine – children love it and need it!

Create a timetable for the day with your child so they know what is happening. Try to make it visual if you can and refer to it throughout the day with the language of 'now and next'. Set them up for success!

2. Little and Often

We all find it hard to concentrate for long periods at times and your children are no different! Make sure they do not spend too long on one task before having a mini active break. Depending on your child this might be every few minutes.

3. Make breaks active

Even if it is for 30 seconds, make a break fun and active. There are all sorts of stretches and exercises your children can enjoy doing. Set them mini challenges to motivate them too.

4. They will love your praise and encouragement

A little praise goes a long way. Praise the good things they are doing and their attitude to the task. Give them encouragement and keep them going. Let them know how long they have left to do the activity.

5. Reward them!

They will definitely need a little reward now and again. You may like to draw out a reward chart and agree with them what the reward might be and how they will earn it. Remember this doesn't have to cost you anything. It might be time playing their favourite game, being out in the garden with you or playing for a while. Work towards little rewards and bigger rewards through the week.

6. Keep things practical

Try to make the tasks practical, hands on and creative. It is what children love and they will often be more engaged in the activity and for a lot longer. It is amazing what you can find around the house to help with this.

7. Fresh Air and exercise

Make sure you all get plenty of fresh air and exercise. Games and activities in the garden or outside (away from others) are important for your mental health. Children love learning outside too so some of the activities could be done outside too.

8. Healthy food, snacks and drinks

This is important to get right. Too much sugar can lead to the wrong kind of energy and lack of ability to focus on the tasks in hand. Consider when to eat, what to eat and why. Help your child to understand this and remember that water is all they really need to drink!

9. Feeling Unwell

If your child is unwell they need to rest. Don't expect too much from them during this time. Also if you're unwell then they will have to do things more independently. Lower your expectations and focus on recovering.

Wishing you all the best.

We will keep you updated over the coming weeks via ParentMail.

Best wishes

Elizabeth Rippon