

23.3.20

Dear Parent/Carers,

First day of Home Learning Completed!

I hope that you had a good day with your child(ren) today in what was the first day of home learning. No doubt the children were excited simply because it is unusual that they would be at home again so soon after half-term, but hopefully they settled down to do a little work once the novelty had worn off. If the exercise video we put on Google Classroom helped them to burn off some excess energy to prepare them for some work, then it will be worth doing the same again in the morning!

We said in the letter on Friday that we welcome feedback on how the home learning is proceeding and in the office today and online we were asked a few questions that we thought it would be good to answer for the benefit of all this evening. If you have any other questions please email them through so that we can address those in future letters.

1. My login for Google Classroom does not work. How do I fix this?

Almost all of the times that parents called us about this today, the problem was that the Google login was 'remembering' another user's account details. The letter sent on Friday explains how to get Google to 'forget' your adult login so that it accepts your child's new login and does not use your parent login as a default. Call us if this problem persists.

2. Who do I contact if I have any problems with home learning?

We have a dedicated senior member of staff in the office to answer calls about home work. Today Mr Hill did a great job taking calls, and tomorrow another member of the SLT will take their turn. Questions can be mailed through as well to st-marys-school@genesistrust.net Please remember that the new office email has ...@genesistrust.net at the end and not the old ...@waltham.sch.uk ending.

Parents should also remember to not email teachers directly, instead using the office email address. The office will then pass the email to the relevant teacher.

3. Do I have to use the lesson plans in the Classroom section of Google Classroom?

The plans that we use in school are quite detailed and the content of them is challenging for the children. They are of course usually delivered by trained teachers. Many of our parents will hopefully feel that they can use the plans to give lessons at home with their children; we have some videos on the way soon to help parents with this. At the same time we totally accept that some other parents will not feel confident enough to use the plans, and so these parents may want to use the large number of tasks and activities that we photocopied and purchased for them. These hard copy activities are not linked to the lesson plans on the Google Classroom, and they do not come with a detailed plan for parents to follow. They will however help the children to practise some key concepts and skills that they should be quite familiar with.

4. Who marks the work that the children complete?

The tasks at the ends of Google Classroom lesson plans are completed in the child's exercise book, the one we gave you. The paper tasks and activities, if they are used, can be completed on the sheets or again the exercise book can be used. The parent 'marks' or gives feedback to the child about how they did.

There is a facility on Google Classroom for work to be uploaded by children and this may be something that we explore at some point in the future.

5. Are the SATs and other statutory assessments going ahead this summer?

No. Y6 and Y2 SATs are cancelled. The Y1 Phonics Screening test and the new Y4 Multiplication Times-Tables assessment are cancelled. The EYFS Foundation Stage Profile assessment is also cancelled. At the end of the academic year in pupil reports we will report to you on what level we believe the children to be working at, but this information will not be collected nationally.

6. I am a Key Worker, but don't need to send my child into school – do I have to?

No. The reduced school we ran today (to just over 40 pupils) was just for those parents who needed the childcare in order that they could undertake urgent work. If there is a 2nd non-Key Worker parent at home or the Key Worker is not working on any given day, then the child should be at home, and not at school.

7. Are Education City and My Maths going to be used for home learning too?

We have not set tasks on these programs yet, but may do in the near future. We will let you know in advance of us doing this. We want to give a diverse offer to parents so that they can choose the approach to home learning that suits them and their family. If EC and MM help to broaden the activities that the children can do and if parents welcome that, then this is something that we can look at in addition to the large number of things we have already offered.

8. Do I have to have a photocopier at home for the lesson plans and tasks on the Classroom section of the Google Classroom?

Having a printer would be a bonus, but no the expectation is that the child would look at the task as it appears on the screen and then write their answers/responses in their exercise book.

9. Can we do other types of educational activities instead of, or as well as, the various activities St Mary's has asked us to do?

Of course. This is a unique opportunity to try out a range of activities in the home learning environment, and so things like cooking, art or music activities, to name just a few, can be used to further stimulate and engage.

We will respond to other questions as the week progresses. In the meantime, stay safe and I wish you a wonderful week with your children.

Yours faithfully,
Mr O'Brien, HT