



# St. Lawrence Primary School



## School closure home learning guidance

### **Guidance for learning at home during covid-19 school closure**

The following guidance will outline our approach to learning at home during the rest of covid 19 school closure.

The guidance needs to be read alongside the new Learning At Home website  
<https://learningathome.gov.ie/>

### **Introduction**

We understand that this is a testing time for you. No-one expects you to replace your child's teacher; your child's teacher will help you to manage your child's learning. All we ask is that you try to seek a healthy balance between learning at home, working from home, running your home and having fun.

### **Home Learning Activities and Teacher's Feedback**

At St Lawrence, we have decided that the most effective way we can help you manage your child's learning at home is to:

- Provide our Nursery class families with a weekly phone call to discuss each child's development and to make suggestions about activities
- Provide our Reception class families with two activities a day. One activity will be practical and play based, developing skills across the Early Years curriculum and one activity will focus on Literacy or Maths
- Provide 3-5 activities a day to KS1 and KS2 children, based on our planned summer term curriculum, using Seesaw
- Provide daily reading, writing and maths activities which are in each child's 'challenge zone'
- Provide encouraging feedback on the activities the children complete, using Seesaw
- Provide community challenges through our Facebook page that children might be interested to take part in and win House Points for their team
- Provide a School Closure Home Learning page in the Parent Zone of our school website, linking a range of websites that our children will find interesting and helpful
- Make a weekly phone call to every family to see that everyone is feeling ok and to answer any questions about Seesaw activities
- Provide further support for children with additional emotional needs or learning needs as required
- Provide further support for families who are finding aspects of parenting difficult through our Family Support Worker
- Being a phone call or an email away from our families!



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### **How much home learning should we be doing?**

This is a difficult question to answer as there is no 'one size fits all' approach that would work for every family.

Professor of Learning and Teaching in Higher Education at University of East Anglia (Prof Gillespie) offers some sensible advice in an article *Coronavirus: How do I home-school my children and what does Bitesize offer?* (Ben Milne, BBC News, 20 April 2020).

She says that much depends on how young the child is, but "if they can stay focused for between an hour and three hours, a day that would be fantastic".

Guidance from teaching unions suggests children do no more than three hours' work a day.

Prof Gillespie says parents should not worry too much on how much time the child spends learning: "It's much better to have a really successful hour where the child enjoys their work, then watches telly."

It's important to know when to bail out, she says, if things aren't going well and everyone is getting frustrated, she advises. "Don't beat yourself up - you can pick things up again tomorrow."

"Children won't remember finishing that geography homework, but they will remember how it made them feel and what the vibe in the house was like."

The amount of work your child should be doing each day is largely dependent on what their teacher sends home. If your child seems to be struggling with the activities their teacher sets, then talk about it with the teacher when he or she phones you.

### **Other Important Advice**

#### **Guide for parents of 3-5 year olds**

No one expects you to act as a teacher.

The focus for home learning with young children has to be based on being playful and having fun. No one expects parents to act as teachers or childcare providers, or to be able to provide all the activities that a nursery or Reception class might.

Make sure that you include your child in the everyday activities like putting on the washing, writing a birthday card or laying the table. Talk to your child as much as possible and take time to explain what you are doing and why. It is important to model how you do things, recognise and praise your child's contributions and provide them with opportunities.

#### **Setting a predictable routine**

Children will feel more comfortable with a predictable routine, so try to help them by:

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- getting up and going to bed at the same time each day
- having regular mealtimes
- turning off any electronic devices, including the TV, at least an hour before bedtime
- sharing a bedtime story
- ensuring they are active for at least 3 hours a day in total

It will help them if everyone in the home talks to them throughout the day, responding to them and being led by the things they are interested in. Try sitting with your child and looking at pictures of their friends or family and talking to them about the things you have done together.

### Physical activity

It is also good to get some fresh air every day. If you do not have a garden and are taking children outside to exercise, make sure you follow the rules on social distancing.

Although this is an anxious and challenging time for everyone, it is also a valuable opportunity to spend time together with your child, which they will benefit from and enjoy.

### Guide for parents 5-11 year olds

#### Make a plan, review it and make changes if it doesn't work

It's important to:

- provide your children with some structure at home because this will help them to adapt to their circumstances
- where possible, share the load with other adults at home
- take care of your own health and wellbeing as parents and carers

#### Know the power of a schedule, timetable or rota

You could, for example:

- involve your child in setting the timetable
- display the timetable on the wall
- try to be flexible with activities and scheduling
- maintain breaks such as snack time and time for play and exercise
- help children to prioritise and understand what is expected

#### Limit distractions

It's hard to avoid distractions, why not try:

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- limiting the use of electronic devices until their schoolwork is done
- allowing your children to play on a device during their breaks

Click here for [9 productivity hacks to stay organised and avoid distractions](#)

### **Make space for learning**

This will ensure:

- your child will achieve their best work in a quiet, comfortable space that is dedicated to learning

### **Mix screen time with other ways of learning**

Mixing screen time and learning is vital:

- children like routines, but they also enjoy variety and different ways to learn
- it's important to mix in paper-based resources or creative activities whenever possible
- encourage reading and writing
- in addition to activities set by school, your children will learn through the tasks you do together at home, including:
  - tidying
  - cleaning
  - washing up
  - cooking
  - planning shopping lists
  - playing games
  - choosing books
  - watching films

### **Keep in touch with us at school**

Make sure you:

- maintain communication with your child's school (think about making notes through the week so you can make the best use of the weekly phone call)
- explain that work has been set by their teacher, this may be easier to understand for your child and reduce the pressure on you
- use feedback from your child's school rather than trying to correct or assess it yourself
- focus on praising your child's attitude, focus and energy for learning

### **Allow children to interact with friends and family through video chats**

You can:

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- allow your child to video chat with their friends or family members, or speak with other parents to set up a video chat
- help your child to stay connected to their friends and family by looking at family photographs or writing a letter

### Remember to schedule time for fun and relaxation

Downtime is important for your child:

- have fun with your children while they're at home
- it's rare for families to be able to have so much time together, so try and make this experience a positive memory
- examples of fun learning activities are:
  - family card games
  - board games
  - exercise activities
  - cooking

We hope this guidance is helpful to you.

If you have any questions or concerns, the best thing is to talk about it (remember we are a phone call or an email away).

Look after yourselves.

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