

25th March 2020



**THE
HASTINGS
ACADEMY**

Rye Road, Hastings,
East Sussex, TN35 5DN

www.thehastingsacademy.org.uk
office.tha@hasla.org.uk
01424 711950

Principal: Hilary Morawska

Dear Parents and Carers,

As the lockdown due to the virus, takes hold of the nation and we all find our lives somewhat disrupted, I would like to offer our complete understanding that many of us, as staff, parents and carers may be feeling, stressed, overwhelmed and under pressure by everything that's happening. This includes the work being sent home for your child/ren, so I wanted to just give my perspective on it all as the Principal of your child/ren and I hope this can help allay some of your fears:

A few points to note first:

- 1) Home learning is not is not home-schooling. This is an unprecedented emergency situation impacting on the whole world. Even our own teachers who are at home, are finding they have to build a new working relationship with their children as they endeavour to ensure they learn. Home schooling is a choice, where you considered, you plan for it and you are your child's school teacher in whatever form you choose. This is, at best, distance learning.
- 2) You are, and always have been, your child's primary educator. If you decide that your child/ren isn't going to engage with any of the written work sent home and that he or she learns best through 'doing' then allow them to spend time gardening, or painting the fence, or helping you bake in the kitchen, allowing time also to watch the television and even the news (to keep them up with current affairs). Talking and spending time together as a family is also such a valuable part of a child's emotional development and keeping this to the fore is as key as the learning of knowledge.
- 3) If you have primary and secondary aged children, at home, we know it will be a challenge at times to find a quiet space (our staff have referenced this, too) – so again – home learning has to fit in with the rhythm of your household. Juggling an infant and simultaneous equations simultaneously would try the best of us.

So, a few FAQs:

Your child's teacher's keep sending home links and emails with more work. Do I have to do it all?

These are suggestions and ideas because the academy wants to ensure it is offering enough. Use them if they suit you, don't if they don't suit. Do not worry if you are your child is unable to work with them, as their parent you will be able to support how best they can learn at home, as above..



- Someone in my child's class has everything done and we've barely started. Will my child fall behind?

Even if everything were equal in terms of support, time and number of children (which it's not) all children learn at different rates. In the class there's a wide range of levels in all subjects, there's different paces and there are many children working on differentiated levels of work. It's almost impossible for teachers to differentiate at the moment, so you don't have to do it either. Just keep your child happy and engaged with all types of learning.

Your child will not fall behind. This is all revision and reminder work. If children could all learn new concepts without specific teaching, we wouldn't need teachers. They will cover all of this again, multiple times.

- I'm not doing any work with my children. All they're doing is building Lego, cooking and playing outside.

All of this is learning -very valuable learning. Allow them this time, especially when the weather is good and the nights are getting lighter

- How can I get three different lots of work done with 3 different children of different ages?

You can't, stop trying. If they're old enough, try to get them to do little bits independently. Otherwise try to do something they can all engage with, reading a story together, some free writing, baking. Have your older children teach your younger children – you could find you have a budding teacher in your own home!

- So what's the bare minimum of work to be completed that our academy is expecting?

Just try and complete what your child can complete – the idea is that we are all trying to work together in a very different way, but do not end up falling out with your children – they will always have something to do and I will always refer to a good book, when all else fails as more learning will take place within the pages of a great read, than in front of a mobile phone or television

My ideal for the children in our academy?

- A bit of reading every day (independent or to them or via audiobook etc)

- Some free writing now and then. If they'll keep a diary or something, great. If not, would they draw a comic?

- Practical hands on maths. Be that via cooking, cleaning, outside or some maths games, physical or digital.

- Some fine motor work. Lego, cutting, playdough, tidying up small toys.

- Physical exercise everyday

- Some art/music and dance where possible through the week. Doesn't need to be guided.



-Stretch goal, if old enough getting them to independently work on a project is great for keeping brains ticking over. Get them researching in a book or online and putting together something to present to you or family.

- If younger, lots of imaginative free play, the more independent the better.

You are doing enough. You are loving your kids and supporting them through a difficult time. Look after yourself. Minimising stress is absolutely vital in a time like this for mental health. Don't let this be something that stresses you. Only you can control that by accepting it is in your circle of control, you are the primary educator and this is all your call.

As always, keep safe and well and in good mental health

Kindest regards



Ms Morawska

