



Newtongrange Primary School

Home Learning Guidance for Parents and Carers

The health and wellbeing of our children and families is imperative at this time and we do not want anyone to feel anxious or stressed by the additional pressure of having to try and teach your children at home. Your children will be learning lots of things through play, exploring the world outside (following Social Distancing guidance) and helping out around the home. However, if your circumstances allow you the time to sit down and work with your child, we have put together some guidance to help make this easier for you.

Top tips – Routine

- **Plan a routine with your child.** Children like to feel involved in their learning so planning things through and agreeing times and a structure with them can really help. Writing down the plan for the day is also useful. This might involve drawing pictures on a timetable for younger pupils, but it can really help for children to see what the plan is and the structure for the day. It reduces stress and anxiety and can help children to cope with changes.
- **Keep things short and simple.** For Primary 1 to 3 pupils, 10 to 30 minutes of learning followed by a short movement break and then changing to a different activity is helpful to maintain concentration and motivation. This time should be extended to 30 to 50 minutes for pupils in Primary 4 to 7.
- **Use timers** – children enjoy knowing how much time is left... this is for the activities that they enjoy and for the ones that they don't. Visual timers are a great way to help move on to the next activity and can help your child to stay on task. (They can also be used for screen time – but they might not appreciate that as much!)
- **Get up and get started.** Everyone's routines are different, and you will know when your child works best but the majority of core learning (numeracy and literacy) is completed in school before lunch time as this is when pupils are most ready and able to learn.
- **The “after lunch” slump is a real thing.** Once lunch time is over, try to have some quiet time with a story, quiet reading or free time.
- **Take learning outdoors as much as you can.** Reading, spelling, numeracy, etc. Everything can be adapted to learning outdoors, something that we have been developing this session at NPS. Learning is not always at a desk and with a pencil, it can be in the garden or in the kitchen.
- **Be realistic about the total amount of time that your child is spending learning.** The government advice is 3 to 4 hours of learning a day but this is NOT all time spent at a desk or doing core literacy and numeracy tasks. This time should also involve daily exercise, personal reading, developing life skills, being creative, being outdoors etc.





Top tips – Learning Activities

Our class teachers are working incredibly hard to think of a wide variety of learning activities to engage and motivate your children. The learning grids have weekly Health and Wellbeing, Literacy, Numeracy and Learning Across the Curriculum activities which are shared on Google Classrooms for our P1-P7 classes and Seesaw for nursery children.

- Before you begin, **look through the weeks** learning activities and talk about the different aspects of learning that are planned for the week. Have a chat about what your child is looking forward to, what looks exciting, resources that they might need, things that they can do on their own etc.
- **Be flexible.** If you don't have the resources – don't worry, don't do it, do something else. There is absolutely no pressure for you to complete these tasks with your child. If you don't have the resources to make the junk model then you could draw a model or find facts or make it out of things you can find in the garden.
- **Please praise effort.** There are lots of things that we find challenging and as long as your child is having a go and putting in effort, that's all we can ask for. As part of our growth mindset learning, we encourage our pupils to try challenging tasks; persevere when things are difficult and ask for support when they need it.
- **If you don't get everything done on the learning grid - don't panic!** There will be plenty of people in this situation particularly with parents having to work from home as well. You can either miss it out or come back to it on another day.
- **Bribery and corruption work!** Who are we kidding, we all do it! "Yes, you can play on the PS4 for half an hour if you do your maths work for today." Ideally, we would like our children to be self-motivated all of the time but they are children and have many powers of persuasion, particularly with their parents. Do what you can to encourage your child to complete their daily literacy and numeracy learning and if this involves giving them an incentive, then go for it.
- **We all need time for relaxation and free play.** Children need time to play with their toys, play on their devices; play board games, time to explore the garden and time to chill out watching TV away from their family. We all need time on our own and time to interact and play with each other.
- **If in doubt – read.** Share stories, listen to stories, read stories aloud to each other, listen to podcasts or radio programmes.... And then talk about the story, the characters, favourite parts, likes, dislikes, interests, new words etc.
- **Take time to develop life skills** – cooking, baking, gardening, fixing things, putting the washing on.... All of these tasks are incredibly important and provide the opportunity to practise lots of different life skills.

We hope that you find this guidance helpful. **Remember, you are all doing an amazing job.** Some days will go brilliantly, some won't. This is ok. Please look after your own health and wellbeing as this is paramount in being able to support your child.

Our school doors may be closed but we are here to support you. You can contact us through school email or Twitter and we will get back to you as soon as we can.

Stay safe and keep in touch.