

Dear Parents,

Plans are now coming together for how we intend to handle the next fortnight.

Thank you to those of you who have been in touch regarding the latest government information on key workers. Further details were published last night. The government has asked schools to remain open only for the children of key workers where there is no one else available to look after them safely. This means, for instance, if one parent is a nurse but the other works in IT, the IT worker should remain at home to care for the children. It may be that creative timetables are needed, with families devising their own shifts of possibly 3 hours a day of school work followed by adult work taking place while children relax in the afternoon or after they have gone to bed. A separate email regarding key workers will be sent to relevant families later today.

Today, children had an assembly where we distributed gems, representing their membership of Farncombe School. I showed a glass vase and told the children I had thought about each one of them in turn and added their gem to the vase. As they leave today, they will take the gem and have it available at home for learning time. The message was very clear that school is not 'over' or 'closed', just different. In fact, their teachers will be thinking about their learning every day and planning four activities for them. These activities will be the ones taught here on site. I reminded the children that, Farncombe School is not really the walls and bricks, it is made up of the children and grown ups who spend time here, following our rules, values and vision.

We talked about how learning in a different place will happen. Key points:

- Set a timetable that suits your family and make it as consistent as possible. The activities provided won't take all day - perhaps complete most in the morning and have a relaxing afternoon, with just one activity. It is probably best to begin with the same activity each day, such as the writing task.
- Ensure your child changes into their school uniform either before or after breakfast (following your usual routine). You may want them to change into civvies later, if this is your normal practice.
- Depending on your child's age and personality, you might like to leave the house at around 9.30am and 'walk' to school, returning home for lessons to hang up coats and start lessons. Some children will appreciate this, others won't, so please be the judge.
- When you are ready to start, put your child's gem on the table and set out the necessary equipment for that day's lessons. Lessons for each year group will be available on the school website under the COVID-19 tab by 9.30 each morning.

- Each day there will be four activities set by your child's class teacher. These will include a writing task, an outdoors challenge, an online task and a practical Maths activity. There will also be a short reflective/religious story or prompt which I will devise. Children should read every weekday, possibly swapping books with other families.
- Remind your child that their teacher has set this work, not you. Try to help your child to feel accountable for completing it, in the way we would at school. Use phrases such as 'As soon as you have...' and descriptive praise for the slightest move towards good work 'You are holding your pencil, ready to start (even if they are slouching or frowning) and 'You tried really hard to start your letters on the line (even if they huffed and puffed through it). More details on descriptive praise will follow next week.
- Take a break when you like, as this is normal school practice.
- Be kind to yourself. Teaching is challenging and tiring!

Thank you for limiting emails into school. Time remains under pressure and fielding individual queries is not the best use of this limited resource. This also includes the school office, so please think carefully before ringing next week. Emails can continue to be addressed to info@farncombe.surrey.sch.uk, but please be patient in terms of delayed responses.

Today has been filled with responding to the new Key Worker criteria, planning for the next fortnight, including a rota of skeleton staff and making today as normal and fun as possible for all pupils. Next week, there will be time to plan further ahead and advise parents on plans for next term. I won't email daily next week, but will be in touch at least twice with information.

Kind Regards,

Andrea