

Sebert Wood's Super Remote Learning Strategies

We are now into the second lockdown and partial school opening and for many this time feels very different. The school is providing remote learning based on the DfE guidance (3 hours for KS1 and 4 hours for KS2) and for many this seems a daunting prospect at times. We have found that some families would like less work and others would like more; either way it is important that you do not put yourself or your child under too much pressure.

We recently focussed on 'Children's Mental Health Week', as this subject is very much in the spotlight, and rightly so. Our school mental health team put together the following tips to help you through the remainder of the lockdown period.

- 1. *Don't try to replicate school*** - *Remote learning isn't the same as school and shouldn't try to be. The dynamics in a class of 30 children is completely different! You cannot always do what teachers do in a classroom at the kitchen table or in the lounge. Work within your resources and abilities, and be flexible.*
- 2. *Establish a timetable that suits you***- *Teachers are available online between 9am- 3pm and can respond to any questions and can give feedback. Having a timetable can be useful for some, but the great thing about our remote learning platform, Google Classroom, is that it allows for flexibility so it can work for you and your family. Does your child learn better in the morning? Others get their brains in gear a bit later in the day. You can allow your children to do their work when they can focus best, when you have time, or when the technology is available. Alternatively, you may decide to go with the flow and let each day be different. Some days you might have your own work to do at certain times and need your child to be focussed and learning at the same time; other days you may have time for nature walks and board games. Try not to feel pressured by what other parents and families are doing. Work out what works best for you and your child.*
- 3. *Set ground rules*** – *As the COVID-19 situation changes frequently, taking things easy may be necessary for a bit. But even if you are taking a relaxed approach to remote learning, it is important to set some ground rules.*
- 4. *Balance online time with offline time*** – *You don't need to be online to get a good education. There are some fantastic resources online and the internet can be a lifesaver if you are trying to work while your child completes their remote learning. However, try to balance the online work with books and practical hands-on-challenges.*
- 5. *Get outside*** – *Spend as much time outside as you can. This is really good for you and your child's physical and mental health. If you have a garden, take the learning out there. Go for walks or bike rides. You can also take advantage of learning opportunities at local*

parks; many have nature trails and other outdoor learning activities (where national guidance allows of course).

- 6. Make the most of the one-to-one attention** – You might not have time to spend eight hours a day with your children, but you don't have to as long as they're getting some one-to-one time. One of the advantages of remote learning is that the one-to-one time can be concentrated and really beneficial.
- 7. Have confidence in yourself** – Teachers do a complex job and they're experienced, but that doesn't mean you don't have a lot to offer. You might well have acquired teaching skills in your work without even realising. Moreover, you know your child better than anyone else, therefore you may already know what motivates them and excites them. Use this to your advantage and tailor your approach accordingly.
- 8. Contact the teachers** – Teachers are able to offer their skills and insights, so ask them questions, share your concerns and take advantage of their knowledge and experience.
- 9. Relax and be kind to yourself** – These are strange times, and while life is beginning to feel a new normal, our children's education has changed in many ways. We can't all be experts, and try not to worry about your child falling behind at the moment. If it all gets too much, distraction techniques can be a good way to be kind to ourselves, calming us and our children and improve everyone's sense of wellbeing - curl up on the sofa and read a book together or watch a film. Tomorrow is always a new day, the most important thing is that you and your child are happy.

Kind regards

Mrs O'Connell, Mental Health Champion