 

**The Woodlands Federation**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Talbot First School  Church Lane  Kingstone  Uttoxeter  ST14 8QJ  [office.talbot@woodlandsfederation.staffs.sch.uk](mailto:office.talbot@woodlandsfederation.staffs.sch.uk) | St Peter’s CE (VC) First School  The Square  Marchington  Uttoxeter  ST14 8LH  office.stpeters@woodlandsfederation.staffs.sch.uk |

05.02.2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope this letter finds you well and you are coping with the demands of remote learning. It looks like our remote learning will be continuing for, at least, 2 weeks after the February Half Term and I’ve pulled together some tips that will help with keeping your child/ren engaged and hopefully help keep you parents sane too!

 Teachers’ Tips for Home Learning 

**Have a routine that mirrors school as much as possible**

* Get your child up at the time they would normally get up for school and follow a normal school get up routine
* Get children dressed (being in your dressing gown and PJs is not helpful)
* Set up an area that is their “school space” if possible
* Have a timetable for the day that you share each morning just as we do in school (adapt the ones we send so that it fits with your commitments)

**I am working from home/ we have more than one child in different year groups**

* **Let your child/ children’s teacher know when learning can realistically be done during the day / across the week**
* **Remember in school children have to be pretty independent as most have one or two adults to 20+ of them!**
* Allocate one to one time to each child in the day and be strict about them having a go on their own or with you just nearby for safety.
* Ask older siblings (unless they have too much work pressure such as Y10 and 11) to support younger ones. Teaching someone else really helps learning stick and is something we use in school.
* Encourage children to be as independent as possible-one of the things that lots of schools noticed last September was that children had slipped back in their independence as learners.
* In school we use things like “3 before me” from Y2 upwards. This encourages the child to re-read, think again then ask a friend (they can do this in Teams) before asking you.
* In Reception and Year 1 teachers don’t do things for the children. Instead they make suggestions like “Try segmenting the word”, “Keep going” , “What could you try next…..” “How might you…”. Ask your child’s teacher for ideas
* In school we give lots of praise for effort not for the outcome

**I am worried about the amount of work.**

* Remember the work set is for children from the highest attaining to lowest attaining. In school, some children will just complete a “core” of essential learning whilst others complete everything and go onto further challenges. Ask you child’s class teacher what is realisitic for your child.

**My child doesn’t seem to be able to focus for a whole lesson and this gets worse over the day**

* Children can only focus for short periods of time. Give them a short break. Maybe do 5 minutes of exercise or give them a snack and a drink then try again. We often have short breaks within lessons and if a child seems tired we will provide them with more breaks
* Lessons are designed with natural break points in them. Use these to break the learning up. For example the teacher might introduce an initial acitivty for the child to do then after the pause point introduce another. The Oak Academy lessons work well with this.
* In school we find children can be less focussed toward the end of the morning and toward the end of the day. Use the mornings for subjects your child finds trickier then in the afternoon do the subjects they are really fascinated by.

**My child doesn’t “get it” . They keep making mistakes.**

* Perfect work is not that useful for the teacher or your child. Children learn by making mistakes and ‘struggling’-finding a task a challenge then solving it.
* If your child can’t spell a word, makes mistakes or doesn’t understand don’t worry. Let your child’s teacher know. This is what we do in school all the time- set learning, look and listen to the responses and adjust the learning based on how the children are doing.

**I don’t what a part whole model is or what a grapheme is. I’m not a teacher**

* As teachers we learn to be honest and say when we don’t know. In fact we celebrate questions that cause us to struggle and learn something new.
* Struggle and not knowing is part of learning so tell your child when you don’t know and then either investigate yourself or contact your child’s classteacher for help.
* To build indpendence in your child as a learner ask them what they think something is or what they think the answer might be or how they might find out.

**Above all please don’t get to the point where you and your child are getting cross and work becomes a battle.**

* If you are losing patience and are thinking to yourself “Why can’t they do this? It is so easy/ simple?” look at it from a child’s perspective. Try to remember back to when you were a learner.
* Mistakes are fine. We talk about “FAIL” (First Attempt In Learning) in school and celebrate it as when we struggle we are learning.
* Mistakes also help teachers- it shows what is secure in the child’s mind and what is not. This helps teachers plan learning.
* Celebrate every effort your child makes

**Most importantly, please talk to school if you are struggling.**

I hope you find these tips useful. You are all doing a great job in really challenging circumstances, thank you.

N.B. It is much easier to teach 30 of other people’s children than it is one of your own, I am speaking from first hand experience!!

My very best wishes

**Mr Jason Gathercole**

**Interim Headteacher**