



YSGOL GYNRADD A MEITHRIN STRYD SIORS GEORGE STREET PRIMARY & NURSERY SCHOOL

Wainfelin Road, Pontypool, Torfaen NP4 6BX

Thursday 23 April 2020

Dear Parents & Carers,

I hope that you and your family are keeping well and that you managed some sort of break over the Easter period. As a 'new term' begins I want to provide you with a little more detail about how we are planning to support pupils through our arrangements for home learning.

At the end of last term, staff and families worked very hard to try to achieve something like 'business as normal' in the first stage of the lockdown. I am enormously proud of the way our whole staff team has pulled together to get a workable solution up and running in a very short space of time. I am also equally appreciative of and impressed by the wonderful support parents and carers have provided at home in adapting to these changes. Thank you all.

With the extension to the lockdown it is clear that we may be in a similar position for quite a while yet. I am very aware that the current situation places a huge strain on everyone. Many of us will be caring for and worrying about others (as well as ourselves), perhaps managing work from home or in a key role. Many will be concerned about money, about the longer-term future or anxious about dealing with the everyday matters that now present new difficulties and concerns at this highly unusual time.

With this in mind, I want to be clear that the tasks and activities that are planned for children are intended as a support. We know the value to children's learning in tackling and completing the activities set. We also know that nothing is more important than balancing this with a happy home life that keeps everyone's health and wellbeing intact. We also know that children learn and develop in lots of ways other than through 'school work'. So, please find what works well for you as parents/carers, as a family.

If you are experiencing difficulty and feel that we can support in any way then please get in touch with me at head.georgestreetprimary@torfaen.gov.uk. I will be able to direct any points to your child's class teacher who can get in touch with you directly. We have already managed to resolve several difficulties this way so please let me know – it is part of what we are here for.

In the meantime, the bullet points below will help to make clear how we will be organising home learning in the coming weeks:

WEEKLY OVERVIEW

- We will continue posting a weekly overview for every class on the school website. You can access this through the class pages. The overview sets the goals for the week. Actual tasks that match these goals are posted on Seesaw.

- The weekly overview will continue to outline **skill activities** that develop children's literacy and numeracy skills. Skill activities build on children's previous learning. These are not intended to introduce new concepts. Children may need varying levels of help depending on their confidence.
- The challenge levels enable children to select the difficulty of the task depending on their confidence. Ambition is great, but if children struggle with a more challenging activity it is important to step back and restart with something simpler rather than to give in. Equally, they can be encouraged to try the next step if they are coping well.
- Skill activities are identified as 'must-do's'. Again, please use your judgement. Following a suggestion by a parent, we are writing the skill activities in order of priority – most important first. So, if you are struggling for time, patience or waning interest then it may be best to focus on those at the top of the list.
- Skill tasks are intended to be quite short, repetitive activities that keep children's skills topped up. Best to keep these relatively brief and then ring the changes.
- The **project activity** is generally more involved and more open-ended. This will often involve some research, talk, reflection and a choice of ways to present. This can evolve over the week and is not intended to be tackled in one go. Lots of opportunity to be creative here too so good to let children try out their own ideas, though probably with a little steer now and then.
- The **life skill activity** often has a wellbeing aspect and aims to provide an opportunity to involve children in family life and to talk about the importance of the everyday things we do to look after one another and ourselves.

READ, WRITE INC. (RWI)

- Many children have regular small group Read, Write Inc sessions that help to develop their reading. From the start of this week, all children who take part in RWI in school have a range of resources in Seesaw to support their reading. The RWI programme is designed to improve children's reading by building on what they have learnt previously. The activities help them to build their knowledge of letter sounds so that they can sound out words and increase their reading fluency. Each child on the RWI programme will also receive a weekly e-reading book through Seesaw that will help them use their knowledge of sounds to read a range of texts. Children can record their reading and upload it to Seesaw so that your child's teacher can hear them read and provide encouragement and feedback.
- Reading is such an important skill, whether your child is part of RWI or not, encouraging reading, reading together or listening to stories is always up there with the best ways to help your child's learning.

bbc.co.uk/bitesize

- You are probably aware that the BBC has launched its own home-learning support providing a range of programmes for primary and secondary age pupils. These online resources are available at the above address and include other support materials that you may find helpful. Where we feel that these resources are particularly useful we may include them in our weekly overview as part of the planning for the week – not as an add-on.

SEREN YR WYTHNOS / STAR OF THE WEEK

- Each Friday we will be awarding two pupils in each class a Seren Yr Wythnos certificate. These certificates recognise the effort and industry of children and would normally be given in our Friday celebration assembly. I will be uploading certificates as an announcement on Fridays so that all the children in each class can see who has earned the certificate that week. Just click the Inbox tab on the right of the screen in Seesaw.

Lastly, if you haven't managed to get to grips with Seesaw yet please do try to get started. You will find that there will be lots of old posts but just begin with where we are now. When children complete and upload activities you are welcome to comment but it is not necessary to indicate that tasks have been completed. Sorry for the length of this letter. I hope that it is useful.

Wishing you and your children well,

A. Brasington

Mr A Brasington