

24th April 2020

Dear Parents and carers,

I sincerely hope that you are and your loved ones are all keeping well and that you are managing to stay positive during these challenging times. I think we have all felt blessed by the good weather which has enabled us to enjoy daily walks and exercise and hopefully this is helping to lift our spirits.

Home Learning

We have come to the end of our first week of remote learning on Seesaw (Years 1 – 6) and Tapestry (Reception children) and I am delighted to see that many children are accessing and enjoying the work being set by the teachers. I have seen some fabulous work over the week and it is lovely to see what a great job parents are doing of keeping children engaged, curious and physically and mentally healthy. Please keep up the good work.

I also appreciate that online learning is no substitute for the children being in a classroom face to face with their teacher and that lots of you are struggling with the technology. I do understand that it is very difficult for some of you and I really don't want to cause parents any more stress in these worrying times.

Below are some of the FAQs I am getting and my suggestions which will hopefully help.

I only have a mobile phone so it is difficult to access the work online.

Look at the activities set by the teacher and give your child paper and pencil to write down the answers. The children do not have to upload their work to send back to the teacher if that is too difficult. You could take a photo of work and send that in if you can but don't worry if you can't. The important thing is that the children have a go at the work set.

Feel free to get in touch via the school office if you continue to have problems and someone will get back to you.

Can I borrow a laptop or iPad from school?

I am currently looking into this. I think it might be possible and I soon as we have worked out logistics we will be in touch with families who are in most need. Obviously we only have a limited number of devices available and certainly nowhere near enough for one per family.

Can I have hard copies of work for the children and textbooks?

Unfortunately this is very difficult to organise for all the children in the school. We do not have enough textbooks to give out to all the families as most of the work children do in class is not from textbooks these days. Logistically it would be very difficult for us to photocopy and distribute the work.

I am finding it very difficult to get my child to engage in online tasks

If it is any consolation we are all fighting similar battles and every parent in the land is in the same boat. Don't get too stressed about it. If the online activities are not working for you or your child change activities.

Here are some ideas of things you can do instead of Seesaw or Tapestry work:

- Learn your tables
- Play some dice games, card games, bingo – anything that involves numbers
- Do some cooking – make sure children do the measuring
- Third Space Learning have some great maths activities [here](#)
- Do some sketching – self-portrait, still life, a tree, a flower
- Go out for a walk – do a treasure trail or a nature trail
- Play catch or bat and ball games or do circuit training if you have a garden.
- Write letters, poems, song lyrics, plays, stories....
- Read, read and read some more.
- Lego, building and making things.
- Get creative
- Have some relaxation and chill out time too – listen to music or choose some quiet activities to do.

There are some links to lots of websites [here](#)

My child is getting through all the work set by the teachers quickly

The process of setting activities online and responding to individual posts is quite time consuming for the teachers. Please don't think they are all sitting in their gardens in the sunshine – they are actually working very hard! We are posting as much work as is possible. We would ask parents to use the websites that we have directed you to if you wish to do more activities with your children or do some of the suggestions above. Thank you.

I am finding it difficult to upload work to send back to the teachers on Seesaw

You do not have to send all the work in to the teachers. It is important that the children are doing educational activities to fill their days but it does not all have to be sent to the class teacher.

The teachers are doing their best to respond to the children's contributions however they may not be able to respond to everything quickly. Please do not get disheartened if they don't respond – remember many of them have their own children at home too so they are juggling quite a lot at the moment.

Emergency childcare at school

We are continuing to provide childcare provision for children of key workers and vulnerable children at school. Despite recent coverage in the press about school's reopening there are no definite plans currently to do so and the guidance from the government remains the same:

'We have asked parents to keep their children at home wherever possible, and for schools to remain open only for those children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response who absolutely need to attend.

It is important to underline that schools, all childcare settings (including early years settings, childminders and providers of childcare for school-age children), colleges and other educational establishments, remain safe places for children. But the fewer children making the journey to school, and the fewer children in educational settings, will protect the NHS and save lives by reducing the risks of spreading the virus.

Schools, and all childcare providers, are therefore being asked to continue to provide care for a limited number of children - children who are vulnerable, and children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.' **DfE Guidance to schools 31.03.20**



We are very grateful to the vast majority of parents who have followed this guidance and continued to care for their children at home wherever possible. We understand how challenging this is for you – particularly if you are continuing to work at home and we appreciate your support.

As soon as I know more about the plans for reopening schools I will let parents know.

Free school Meals

All parents who are entitled to Free School Meals should now have received their food vouchers. Mrs Glover has sent out further information about this. Please email the school office on admin@st-marys-tetbury.gloucs.sch.uk if you have any questions about this.

Safeguarding and well being

This continues to be a worrying time for everyone and I know many people are suffering with anxiety. If you have any concerns about any of our pupils or families or if you are experiencing trauma, distress or difficulties in your own families please do not hesitate to get in touch with Mrs Silins on helen.silins@st-marys-tetbury.gloucs.sch.uk and she will get back to you.

Please keep an eye on the school website and Seesaw for further information and if you have any questions please email the school office on admin@st-marys-tetbury.gloucs.sch.uk and someone will get back to you.

Take care and keep safe,

Mrs Woolley and everyone at St. Mary's School.