

Home Learning During 2020 Covid-19 Closure



Dear Parent/Carer,

We are entering territory where we will be trying to do something we have never done before:

Work in partnership to maintain a link between home and school and sustain some learning and continuity through a long period where children will not be in school.

Like most things in life there are pros and cons to this.

On the downside, children and families are losing access to school, to face to face contact with teachers and with their peers. This will change the course of social and academic progress for a while. We are not used to being socially distant and adapting to a different lifestyle will be uncomfortable at times. The anxiety many of you will feel about health, work, income and your children's education is a heady mix and we will need to allow ourselves time to process all of the powerful emotions that this situation evokes.

On the up side, people are resilient and if we can sustain our physical and mental wellbeing through the ups and downs of the coming weeks and months, we will bounce back. This period of closure and working from home will enable us to spend time with our children and families that isn't usually available to us. It will provide opportunities to take life at a different pace and do things together. We are creative and adaptive people, and with flexibility and support from each other we have the capacity to not only get through this crisis, but to learn from it and from each other.

Please do not feel that you must take on the role of a school and a teacher as well as a parent.

The relationships in school, between children and teachers, and the school environment and structure are very different from the relationship between a parent and a child and the home environment.

Even those of us who are teachers do not remain teachers to our own children when we are at home, nor should we.

We must have discipline in our thinking to accept that we have limitations and that while we should try to sustain a degree of 'home schooling' it should be tailored to our own context and what we can cope with along with all of our other demands. Look after your relationships, look after your wellbeing and the rest will come.

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Education is a holistic thing: reading, writing and maths are important, but nurture and growth also require play, talking and listening and exercise. Play games, go for walks, watch films together and talk about them. Be structured, but also be prepared to be flexible and take advantage of a sunny morning or a whim to do something in the garden or to bake bread. Don't try to do it all and keep up with the super-parents you'll see on social media – we only see what people choose to present. If you do not get to all of the activities suggested by your teacher it's not the end of the world. If you can't bake or don't have a garden, it's not the end of the world.

Much of the learning we are providing is online. It is also really important to have an off screen life. Reading to and with your children is a huge benefit. Seek out opportunities to read to your children and for them to read to you. If your house isn't full of books there are lots of online sources of materials which can be accessed.

The nature of this crisis means that you or some of your loved ones may be ill during the weeks to come, the same applies to our staff who are also caring for their families. You may need to lower your expectations of yourself and of us at times. The humans and the technology will have hitches and glitches, there will be passwords that won't work and network problems, there will be off days and dark days. Expect complications – this has never happened before in our living memory.

We're starting off in this journey with much to learn. We hope to get better and innovate as time goes on. In all things in the coming days and weeks we should all, above all be kind to ourselves and to each other.

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Our Plans Regarding Home Learning:

- Most of our content will be online. We will begin delivering online learning activities officially on Monday 23rd March. Most teachers may upload some message or note before that to trial the system and touch base with you.
- We will have learning packs available to be collected from the school tomorrow 20th March between 8.30am and 4pm. In some classes this will be little more than an exercise book or two and some instructions. In other classes there will be additional paper materials such as workbooks or practice papers.
- Learning packs will be in folders or envelopes on tables on the porch area at the front of the school from where parents can collect them. A member of staff will be on hand to offer assistance in locating the packs.
- All classes will communicate with parents via **SeeSaw**. Please make sure that you have downloaded the parent app onto a device that is regularly checked. We have tried to ensure that all parents have log in details and for those who have not yet registered an instruction sheet will be included in your child's learning pack.
- We are exploring additional online reading resources for P1-4 pupils and hope to have systems in place to provide ability appropriate material and guidance to parents soon. We will inform you of this via SeeSaw when we get things in order.
- We have set up an online classroom using **Microsoft Teams** and **Microsoft OneNote** for P7 only. This is a new resource that we are trying out for our P7s- hopefully we can guide you clearly through it. In order to access their online class notebook, pupils will need their **C2K username** and **password**. All pupils have free access to **Microsoft Office 365** with their C2K login details on a device. (A setup guide will be provided).

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Here is a **sample** guide of what a week's learning will look like (with variations for age across year groups):



P7 Weekly Learning Guide

Week Beginning: 23/03/20

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Spellings Definitions- List 21 (Silent 'p')	Time Tuesday	Work it Out Wednesday	Pobble 365	Spelling Test Daily 10
Literacy- Heroes & Villains- Alex Rider Illustration	Numeracy- Parts of a Circle	Literacy- Heroes & Villains Comprehension	Numeracy- Circles	Topic-
Daily Challenge- Numeracy	Daily Challenge- Literacy	Daily Challenge- Physical	Daily Challenge- Art	Daily Challenge- Journal
Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading

Literacy Learning Intentions

1. recognise how authors create interesting characters
2. find information from a text

Numeracy Learning Intentions

1. identify parts of a circle (diameter, radius, circumference)
2. calculate the radius and diameter of circles in a variety of contexts

- Work will be uploaded at the start of the week to allow flexibility during the week. You may choose to do things in a different order or to leave things off your timetable and substitute them with alternatives. You may also choose to supplement activities from other online sources or through doing good old fashioned hobby activities with your children. We'd love to hear about that via SeeSaw
- P7 pupils using Microsoft Teams and the Class Notebook to record their work, we will be able to see it and give feedback. We will also upload videos explaining answers to work that has been set.
- If pupils are unable to record work on Microsoft Teams and Class Notebook, they can use the provided exercise book. Answers to work will be provided on SeeSaw too.
- If you have any queries, we are contactable on SeeSaw and also email – a year group specific version of this from class teachers will include email details.
- Teachers will generally check in at the start of each day Mon – Fri with a comment or a message. This may simply be to say hello or provide some feedback from the previous day.
- Teachers will also check in towards the end of the school day. It may be the next day before comments are responded to. We will not be providing a 24/7 service in order to maintain some discipline and look after our own wellbeing.

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Admin Issues

The school office will be open at times but we are not clear how this situation will evolve and most of us will be working from home as per government advice.

We are working to refund monies owing to parents for things like cancelled school trips etc. This will be posted to you by cheque as soon as we can get it done.

If you need to speak to someone on the phone and there is no response to the office number, contact us via email info@forg.belfast.sch.ni.uk and we will try to get back to you within a reasonable time frame.

Remember – this is never happened before and we all have more questions than answers.

Thank you for your support, we will get through this together- Forge-style!



FORGE INTEGRATED PRIMARY SCHOOL

Find below a number of useful apps to help you and your child with learning at home.

Online Learning



Individual teachers will post learning activities at the start of each week on Seesaw.



Teach Your Monster to Read is currently a free app which helps with basic phonic and reading skills. It's great fun!



Explain Everything is a great app for all ages which help developing presenting skill. Your child can type, upload images, create videos.....



Try some coding activities.



Pic Collage is a super app for creating posters, cards...



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