



Thursday 28th January 2021

Hello everyone– from the confines of home again; another Year 6 case in my bubble AND my daughter is positive following an outbreak in the school she works in. I am just so grateful to staff in school, still below numbers, holding it altogether. I'm so pleased to report that Susie, Bethan and Sam are recovering and working again although not at full capacity– and we send more love to Janet who is still at home.

And news yesterday that we may open on March 8th. The thought of being together and having some Spring sunshine seems too good to be true. Imagine! The national picture does look so much better in terms of cases so let's hope this becomes a reality. I'm not quite getting the need for two weeks' notice; we don't need 2 weeks to be ready and I can't believe you need two weeks to 'close down' home learning. Heh ho! Let's work towards that date and do all we can to make it a reality, and the start of a happy, healthy second half of the school year.

In case of any confusion for those children in school, **we are not having an INSET day on Friday 5th February.** That date was in our calendar, deferred from November. We want to use our final INSET day to get out to other great schools and to be inspired. We have been thwarted from doing this on two occasions now! School will be as usual on that day for those children in school. We will hope to be able to add this extra day in the Summer term.

Friday 5th February will however be a **SCREEN FREE day!** We all need one! One of the hardest things of lockdown has been enforcing something – screen-time and sitting still - that we have always discouraged.

Here's the plan:

We won't even see you at 9am on the Friday. On Thursday 4th, teachers will share a suggested timetable for the Friday. All worthwhile things but all away from screens. We are mindful you may well be working and the aim is not to create activities that need you. It isn't a 'day off school' but rather a reminder that we learn in so very many other ways!!!!

Home Learning

At our governing body meeting last night, all the parent governors shared challenges and frustrations with home learning: being too involved, not being involved enough; helping too much, not helping; losing patience, not understanding; feeling judged, feeling critical; sensing the work was too easy for their child, sensing their child was behind others. Layered onto your best efforts is the noise of class WhatsApp groups too!

Natalie, our deputy (and back in business after her maternity leave at the end of March – hurray!) reminded me of what I have said many times to teachers over the years, about reflecting on the week in class. That we all have A moments, B moments and C moments. An A moment for you might be 30 minutes when your child works independently and happily, a B moment might be success but with lots of you nudging, and a C moment might be a disastrous 'paired' go at what appeared to be a harmless fraction practice task with all sorts of tensions when things go wrong and it ends in tears. IT'S FINE. Ultimately if you can reflect on the bigger picture (there WILL be A moments every week!) and stay close and happy as a family, that is going to matter far more. It is fine to report to us that it went wrong today, was a bad experience or that you simply didn't have time. Remember too to ask for help. Teachers are being so responsive at picking up on individual issues.

Our sense is that you are all doing brilliantly. We have a light at the end of the tunnel now and we will get there!

I think the document below is really helpful. It's a checklist for the day and it puts 'screen-work' into a broader context of what a good day looks like. I shall be suggesting staff put it on their fridge too! Note the reference to learning breaks (we never ask the children to work for 2 hours solid!) and the need for that daily 'well done' from you.



The second document is 7 tips to help with reading at home. All very good advice. All teachers are offering 'book swaps' each week so do take advantage of this.

Parents Meetings next week

Our first go at virtual meetings with you all are next week. We have almost every family booked in.

This will be a chance to catch up on the whole year to date and of course, to share your sense of how home learning is going. You will be sent a zoom link and, if all goes well, will be in a waiting room until your allocated time. Please 'arrive 5 minutes early' and accept that the meeting may end somewhat abruptly as teachers 'exit you' and 'bring in' the next parent!!! Our booking system will send a reminder. Remember to read the time carefully; it's easy to see 'end time' rather than start time on the reminder text.

Author visit

Lovely scenes in Year 2 yesterday where the author of the book they are sharing made a guest LIVE appearance on zoom! The children – and Dianne Hofmeyr – were delighted! If any parents know any authors - or indeed anyone famous - who might provide a surprise appearance for the children, please let us know.

And today, Year 6 had a 2 hour 'live' recreation of a court case with the Royal Courts of Justice! The children assigned as witnesses, clerks, solicitors etc. It was excellent! Well done Year 6 for amazing participation.

Nursery applications

A reminder to all of you and your neighbours that we need applications for Nursery 2021. This will be for children born between 01.09.17 and 31.08.18. We sense that with lockdown and the lack of access to both visiting us and meeting up with other parents, that many parents don't have the same sense of urgency for applying

Home improvements

A reminder about our next PTA project: new gates in Raveley St that will be re-designed and rebuilt. They are to be called 'the Kate Gates'. We are running this as a crowd-funding project and, if we don't reach our target of £10,000 by the closing date of April 1st, we cannot access ANY of the pledged money to date! Here is the link. If you were able to share it with alumni that would be great. A huge thank you to all those who have so generously donated to date.

<https://donatemyschool.com/eleanor-palmer-school-association-2403>

Stars of the week

Congratulations to you all on another week. Teachers will continue, in the absence of Golden Book assembly, to highlight children who have done particularly well. I have a large collection of chocolate button bags for this week and last week's stars. Do come and collect yours anytime 8-6 daily – we'd love to see you!

- **Reception** - Marcus - who is always so smiley and positive. Well done for persevering with addition this week and making lots of writing progress.
- **Year 1's** star is Nora! She has been working so hard in all her work. Really taking time to think things over and not rushing anything. Also in her Egyptian goddess work she did lots of research and thought about a different way to present her work – with a model. Well done!
- **Year 2** August for fantastic detail and pictures in his Savannah animals fact file.
- **Year 3** Mani – for his effort and enthusiasm!
- **Year 4** Miya – for really hard work in biography writing, small group maths and topic experiments.
- **Year 5** Aurelie: so much enthusiasm for her learning, pride in her work and always wanting to contribute to group discussions.
- **Year 6** Luz - Fantastic news bulletin and a great turn as a barrister in our session with The Royal Courts of Justice.

With love and best wishes to you and all your family.

Kate Ford



7 Top Tips to Support Reading at Home

Shared reading is a great way to develop children's language and communication and to boost their reading skills. Regular reading routines can offer lots of opportunities for learning during school closures.

1 Concentrate on reading quality (it isn't all about reading lots!)



Don't worry too much about the 'what' and 'how' of reading each day. Books are great—but leaflets, comics, recipes and instructions on a webpage can all be great too. Following a recipe to make some cupcakes is valuable reading. Be on the lookout for reading, wherever it is!

2 Ask your child lots of questions



All reading matters. Shared reading is about 'reading with', not just 'reading to' (even for older children). So, ask lots of 'Wh' questions, such as Who? What? When? Where? Why? Try them when talking about books: for example, 'what do you think Harry is feeling?'

3 Ask your child to make predictions about what they have read



If it is a book, look at the front cover—or the last chapter—and talk about what might happen next. Look for clues in the book and be a reading detective! For example, 'can you see the bear on the front cover? Where do you think he will go?'

4 Ask your child to summarise what they have read



When you've finished reading, talk about what happened. Acting out the things that happened in the story or describing the big idea of a chapter is really fun and maximises learning. For example, 'can you remember all the things that happened on the bear hunt?'

5 Ask your child to write about what they have read



Write, or draw pictures, from anything you've read! Big writing and pictures are even more fun. For example, use an old roll of wallpaper to make a treasure map with clues from the stories you've read together.

6 Read and discuss reading with friends or family



Make books a part of the family. Encourage your child to share them with a relative or friend, over a video call. Laugh about them when you are making meals together. For example, 'I hope the tiger doesn't come to tea today!'

7 Maintain the motivation to read



Talk about the joy of reading whenever you can. Your child is on an amazing journey to becoming a reader. Put them in the driving seat and have fun on the way! For example, 'choose your favourite story for bedtime tonight.'

Education Endowment Foundation (2018)

Preparing for Literacy: Improving Communication, Language and Literacy in the Early Years. Education Endowment Foundation: London.

Available online: [eef.org.uk/eef/publications/preparing-for-literacy](https://www.eef.org.uk/eef/publications/preparing-for-literacy)

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Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools. Education Endowment Foundation: London.

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Breadnors, H.L., Vardy, E.J., Cunningham, A.J., Kwok, R.K.W., & Carroll, J.M. (2019).

Literacy Development: Evidence Review. Education Endowment Foundation: London.

Available online: [educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/publications/literacy-development-evidence-review](https://www.educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/publications/literacy-development-evidence-review)



Supporting home learning routines

Planning the day



Consistent routines are important for behaviour and wellbeing in school and our routines at home have changed significantly. Routines support behaviour and you will be finding a new rhythm with your family. You could share this checklist with your child. Talk to them to help them plan their new routines.

The importance of simple approaches as part of a regular routine is key recommendation 4 of the EEF's guidance report [Improving Behaviour in Schools](#)

	M	T	W	T	F
I woke up at a good time.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
I did some exercise.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
I had regular meals and drank water.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
I enjoyed some reading in a quiet space.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
I practised a maths skill.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
I completed some school work at my work space. I chunked it so I had some breaks too.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
I talked to my family about my day and how I am feeling. I asked them about their day.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
I helped with a household job and talked to my family while I did it.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
I contacted my friends.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
I spent some time on my creative hobby.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
My parent/carer told me what I did well.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
My goal:	<input type="checkbox"/>				
My goal:	<input type="checkbox"/>				

