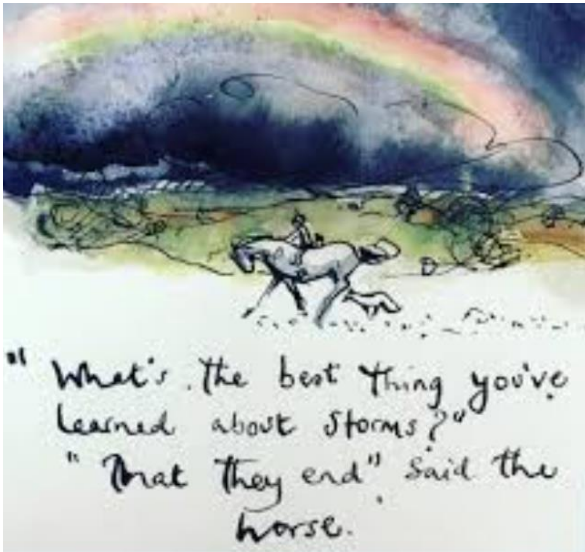


Frequently Asked Questions – Part 2

5th February 2021



As we approach the end of a very unique term 3, we wanted to say a huge well done and please keep going!

We know that in terms of home learning, some days will be easier than others and that on some days the children may be more or less motivated than the day before, but the message from us is to keep going and keep persevering!

We hope that the children will be back with us soon, but it is important to remember that if the children continue to develop the basics and follow the sequences of work being set by the class teacher, they will reap the rewards and see the benefits when they return to school.

There are days which will be hard and we appreciate it is difficult to keep the children going, but in the words of Charlie Mackesy: *"What's the best thing you've learned about storms?" "That they end" said the horse.*

This is the case with home learning and the school closures. We will get through the storm and we are so close, but we must keep going until the end. So please continue to work as best as you can with home learning and help your children to engage, as it will be extremely beneficial for when the 'storm' ends. As usual please reach out to us, if you have any questions or concerns.

Home Learning:

It was great to see well over 70 families represented at last Thursday's parents' meeting to review our home learning provision. Whilst the overwhelming feeling is one of positivity, we know that there are some areas for us to work on and continue to review whilst in the current lockdown.

Getting the balance right for everyone is difficult, as for every parent that wants more work for children, there are those who may think it is more than enough. Some parents want structure every day and others would prefer flexibility in the afternoons. Many love the pre-recorded lessons but others may feel that they are too long and prefer live lessons. What we have tried to do with our remote learning provision is to find a balance that we feel works best for the children in school and those at home and also works within the capacity that we have in our staff team.

Please remember we are always contactable and if you have any questions please contact your child's class teacher, or contact the school office to speak to a member of SLT.

Questions:

Could we have a variety of options (like you do for home learning) to complete in the afternoon, away from the computer, and give parents flexibility? I am concerned that my children are having too much screen time.

We have considered the question of flexibility and we know parents have mixed views, with some liking the structure of the timetabled foundation lessons, and some wanting greater flexibility. From Term 4, we will be looking at trying to do a mixture of both, with links for foundation subjects still given, but also a few activities that can be chosen by parents which gives time away from the screen and can be utilised throughout the week. In terms of screen time, it is very important that as a parent you balance the children's well-being alongside trying to complete what is set by the class teacher.

Working on the task throughout the day, taking regular well-being breaks, will continue to be very important. Have breaks for a drink, going for a walk, having lunch etc will freshen up children, just as having break time in school does. Alongside this FAQ document is the EFF information that we originally set out which gives information on how to structure the day for the children to enable them to complete their home learning.

The expectations are too high. How do I complete all the work? It is brilliant provision but the quantity of work is too much. What do I prioritise?

This is a very fine balance and we do empathise with everyone trying to balance the environment at home with completing home learning. The children have been set what we feel is the appropriate amount of work for a day, although for some parents the amount that their children can manage or what they expect their child to complete will vary. If you feel that your child is having difficulty in getting everything done, the key is to talk directly to the class teacher. Likewise if you feel that it is not enough work, please talk to your child’s teacher. They will then offer advice and information and, knowing each family as well as we do, will be able to offer specific information on what to do next and what to prioritise.

Pre-recorded lessons are too long.

As set out in the first guidance we have tried to stay as close as possible to the sequence of work that the children would be completing in school at this current time. This is why the pre-recorded lessons will vary in length, and will range from 5 minutes input to 30 minutes, depending on what is being modelled or delivered by the class teacher. If you feel the videos are too long it may be best to listen in smaller chunks, to help your children concentration.

How do I motivate my child to complete the work? As a parent I am finding it difficult to know when to push/encourage/discipline and not allow them to give up too soon.

As a parent myself, I agree that this is probably the hardest aspect of lockdown, trying to get the children motivated to complete what is set. The key thing for us to say is that you will find what works best for you and your family and it is important to know that what works in one household might not work in another. Rewards and incentives can be used, such as additional stickers, extra game time, aiming for bigger prizes, whilst sometimes a child may be just motivated to complete lessons without needing any incentive. As parents and carers you are all doing a fantastic job, and you know your children best! In term 4 we will also have Parents’ Evenings to see how things are going. Please do not hesitate to speak to your child’s class teacher if you have any concerns as we do need to make sure that the children are engaging in what is being set, whatever means you use to motivate.

Can we have more physical well-being activities?

To help with physical well-being and fitness, Mr Cox is uploading fitness videos that can be followed via our school you tube page. He is also running live fitness sessions every Thursday at 2:30pm for all children who would like to participate in them and we will be looking to increase the frequency of these depending on whether the lockdown continues.

Having to juggle Class Dojo, Tapestry and links for YouTube can be very difficult.

With the pre-recorded provision that we have advocated, we really appreciate that finding the right links and uploading work can be tricky. To try and minimise the problems, we have tried to make the process as simple as possible, with a time table that is posted out with the links on. This is updated on Class Dojo and Tapestry when necessary. We try to make sure all the hyperlinks are working, but know in very few circumstances there have been problems. Alongside the weekly timetable, daily updates are also added to class pages. Any difficulties that arise, please contact your child’s class teacher as soon as is possible.

- Friday home learning links:
- 8.50 Zoom check in:
Meeting ID: [REDACTED]
Passcode: [REDACTED]
 - Maths: <https://youtu.be/UbUDShWFJfs>
 - English: <https://youtu.be/Ri3aUsdtAW4>
 - Banana phonics: https://youtu.be/AqDdRM_TlOM
 - Strawberry phonics: <https://youtu.be/lxp-MVSXu9s>
 - PSHE: <https://classroom.thenational.academy/lessons/safety-first-ccu64t>
 - 3:10 Check out with Miss Hurd:
Meeting ID: [REDACTED] Passcode: [REDACTED]

Why is a timetable given with only a few links? Why can we not have all the links for the whole week?

As you can imagine, the teachers are working tirelessly to ensure that they are able to teach the critical workers’ children in school, as well as providing excellent teaching and learning opportunities for children at home. The work that is being delivered in the core subjects Maths and English is following a very clear sequence of lessons, which provides good learning from day to day. Teachers need time to plan, prepare, record and upload these lessons (which can take a long time) as well as continue to teach children in school. This is why you will find that core lessons for the end of the week may not be recorded at the start of the week. Using assessment knowledge and looking at children’s work that has been uploaded, teachers may find that a lesson has to be adapted, so will not pre-record all sessions at the beginning of the week.

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	
		Meeting ID: 899 0401 17:30 Passcode: 507a2c	Recognise equal groups https://youtu.be/5R5Gat124	Key features of instructions https://youtu.be/1R5Gat124	N	Geography: Oceans and Seas Lesson 1 https://classroom.thenational.academy/lessons/what-is-the-ocean-c199e	Meeting ID: 885 4077 8471 Passcode: 0n5h
		Meeting ID: 899 0402 17:30 Passcode: 507a2c	To be recorded	To be recorded	C	Science: Human U/Esible Lesson 1 https://classroom.thenational.academy/lessons/what-are-the-different-parts-of-the-human-body-70a657a3nity-video-clip-1	Meeting ID: 885 4072 8423 Passcode: 0u3U
		Meeting ID: 899 0403 17:30 Passcode: 507a2c	To be recorded	To be recorded	H	PSHE: I know my rights Lesson 1 https://classroom.thenational.academy/lessons/i-know-my-rights-c133	Meeting ID: 885 4072 8423 Passcode: 0u3U

I don't understand all the terminology used by teachers, eg Whole / Part / Part Subordinate clauses.

We understand that some of the vocabulary and methods in Maths are possibly different to our own experiences in school. This is one reason that chose to provide pre-recorded lessons, so that the lesson can be paused and recapped at your own pace with your children. In some instances when introducing new terms, teachers will be modelling this to children and PDF documents have been provided with some of the terms to help inform parents, depending on what year group your child is in.

There is not enough small group work. Some children need extra help, but there is not much support for children that find work too hard.

Across the school depending on the capacity of the staff (it is important to remember that they are still teaching critical workers' children in class for part of the day) and the year group, more small group work is being offered. This can also be dependent on the activity, the year group and individual children. Feedback on work is one way that children can make changes and edit their work and more teachers are now offering this opportunity when the need arises. For children who may be finding the work tricky, we have asked parents to make contact with the class teacher to see what additional support and provision can be given; we know that this has started and that some children are receiving additional small group time. Mrs Hardy, our SENCO, has also made contact with many families to discuss the adaptation of work.

Can we have more 'stuff' that siblings can work on together?

As we look to have more level of choice for children in the afternoon, this is one area that we will be looking at. The development of whole school WOW days are another example of where siblings can work together and we will be continuing to provide these when necessary moving forwards.

Zoom: The zoom check in and check outs are too long. The zoom passwords keep changing, can we have the same one? Why does my child need to be at the zoom check in and check out? The zooms are too close together.

The zoom calls are important for a number of reasons. Firstly your child's teacher is really missing those children who are not in school and this is one way that relationships can continue to be developed, and so live interaction is really important for this. The morning check in also enables teachers to set up the day and inform the children what is coming up, in case there are any uncertainties about what is expected. A morning attendance register is being taken and we are monitoring which children are accessing this check in, as it enables us to see if there are any families who may need additional support.

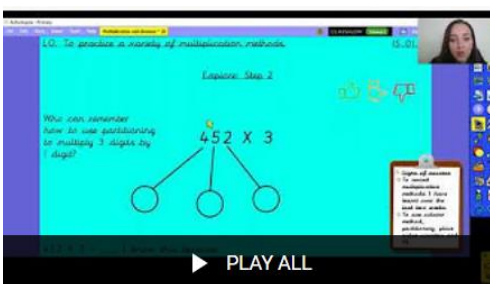


The zoom check out is also really important as it allows the children to share the successes of the day and the teacher to again have live interaction with their class. This may enable them to talk about any key difficulties that may have been experienced or any questions that the children have. It is also a chance for the teacher to share successes.

A number of parents have asked that the zoom codes are kept the same for all meetings within a particular year group. For ease of access, we are looking at some classes having the same code and password for a week, **before it is updated and changed for security purposes.** Zoom is proving to be very popular and has been a great resource over the lockdowns. In terms of the zoom times, we feel that these are, on the whole, working very well and for the time being will be keeping them at the times they are currently.

Why have you chosen to do pre-recorded lessons? I prefer live lessons.

Each school has been left to decide what they feel is the best way forward for delivering remote learning. One of the main reasons behind our rationale for choosing the pre-recording of core subjects is to enable ease of access to all families at home, with pre-recorded lessons available on a number of different devices. Having a pre-recorded session also enables families to take their time on the work and be able to spend time pausing and rewinding the lessons. It means that children can go back to anything that they found confusing or re-watch a teacher modelling a given concept, eg they can watch over and over again how to do long multiplication. Having a pre-recorded video also means differentiated questions can be responded to by the children in their own time. As a staff we believe that pre-recorded lessons is working for our children both in school and at home and whilst some people may want to move to live lessons, the structure of the school day is working well with pre-recorded lessons.



A note about e-safety: With the children spending more time online over this period, please can we remind you of the importance of e-safety. We particularly remind parents of the need to ensure that children are working in an open space in the house, where it is possible to easily keep an eye on their learning and be available quickly should they encounter any difficulties.

Safeguarding

As you know, safeguarding and keeping children safe is our number one priority in school. It is very important to remember that children are using online platforms a lot more than they would possibly be doing. Please be vigilant in ensuring that your children are not accessing other areas of the internet, which may be inappropriate. All our videos are uploaded to our school YouTube page and we direct you to specific links, but it is important to still supervise your children when they are using online platforms, and for you to remind your child of the e-safety rules that they covered as a whole school in Computing in Term 1. Please see below further links on how to keep your child safe online:

Guidance

Coronavirus (COVID-19): support for parents and carers to keep children safe online

Updated 25 June 2020

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-keeping-children-safe-online/coronavirus-covid-19-support-for-parents-and-carers-to-keep-children-safe-online>

Do the staff have a tenable workload? We are concerned for the workload of staff. Can you pass on sincere thanks for all the work the staff are doing!

The staff have been amazing over the last few months, especially when we think back to arriving in school on day one after Christmas ready for a new term! The recording of lessons, feedback online, additional phone calls, interactions, meetings with parents etc do take time, and I know staff have really appreciated all the encouraging messages and positive notes of support. As always the staff have done everything that they can do to inspire the children to be the best that they can be in the current time, but also to make sure that the children are ready to return to school, ready to carry on with their learning, having made progress throughout lockdown. One of our main priorities is staff well-being, and as leaders and school governors we continue to be there for staff and to check in on how they are doing.

What is the best way to contact teachers?

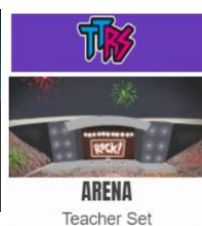
Obviously nothing beats face to face contact, but in the current climate we do need to rely on other systems such as Class Dojo and Tapestry. If you need a telephone call from your child's class teacher, please contact the school office and we will ask the teacher to call you when they can.

How long are you expecting children to work for? What is a good routine to have?

Government guidance recommends that KS1 children should be working for up to 3 hours a day and KS2 children 4 hours a day. With the timetable of lessons that we have structured we feel that more than enough lessons are provided. However, you will find a balance that will work for you at home, in your individual environment. We would urge you to speak to your child's teacher if you have worries, and we can talk to you about some ideas around structuring and timetabling the day with lots of breaks throughout for the children. Different families will find different routines work for you and your children.

What else should we be completing?

Class teachers will also be reminding your child to complete some of the basics, such as reading every day, learning key number facts via Times Table Rockstars or Numbots. Please encourage your children to do these key things for ten minutes each day; it will all be beneficial in the long term.



Reviewing our provision:

It is important to understand that we are continually revising our online provision. If you have any more questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact us. In a couple of weeks' time, we will be sending out another FAQ newsletter to cover any new questions that may have arisen. We have given lots of information about the school lockdown and this has been put on a new page on our website and we hope you will find this useful. Please visit our school website for this information. <https://www.sthelensprimary.org.uk/>

Once again we would urge you to let us know as soon as possible if you have difficulties with access to devices or data.

Thank you for your continued support.

