



Headteacher: Mr. L. Duncan (MSc, BEng (Hons), PGCE)
Dene House Rd. Seaham. SR7 7BJ. Phone 0191 5813055
www.st-marymagdalen's.durham.sch.uk
Email: seahamstmary@durhamlearning.net

Sunday 10th January 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

RE: Home Learning Parent Information

I fully appreciate that many of you may be feeling worried, stressed and possibly overwhelmed with everything that is happening at the moment. The sudden announcement of school closures, due to this ongoing pandemic, has once again greatly impacted on the workload and anxiety of many parents and school staff. The responsibility of home learning, whilst trying to juggle working hours and carrying out the myriad of other responsibilities required to run a family home, is a real challenge for many of you. I fully understand that. Likewise, I hope you can appreciate that the responsibility of delivering effective education and lessons to all pupils, both in school and remotely at the same time, is also a real challenge for school staff. Since returning after the Christmas break, school has received many messages of support and thanks from parents and I would like to express my sincere appreciation for this and for your ongoing patience at this time.

Last week, a number of questions were raised by parents regarding remote learning and how this will operate. I have included some queries and Frequently Asked Question (FAQ's) together with answers below that will hopefully outline how we will be supporting you and your child with home learning in the coming weeks.

FAQ's:

1. How is the school supporting Home Learning?

We will be providing a weekly year group 'Home Learning' grid, resources and remote lessons via our school website. Your child will be able to access their class resources and remote lessons by logging into their MS Teams account each day. Reception pupils will continue to use their 'Evidence Me' platform and will receive ongoing information from the EYFS team. Teachers will aim to deliver a number of daily remote lessons to support you and your child. Links to other learning resources, such



as Times Table Rock Stars and Spelling Shed etc. will also be available (all passwords are available in the back of your child's homework books. Please contact the school office if you have any issues with passwords). If you wish to email your child's class teacher with a query or question, please use the emails provided below. **Do not** use the teacher's personal email (as shown on MS Teams) as these are not valid email addresses and cannot be responded to.

EYFS: Contact through EYFS learning App

Year1: *Smm2020y1@durhamlearning.net*

Year2: *Smm2020y2@durhamlearning.net*

Year3: *Smm2020y3@durhamlearning.net*

Year4: *Smm2020y4@durhamlearning.net*

Year5: *Smm2020y5@durhamlearning.net*

Year6: *Smm2020y6@durhamlearning.net*

2. How does my child access the home learning materials?

You can access the home learning materials on our school website using the link, www.st-marymagdalens.durham.sch.uk. Click on the 'pupil' tab to access the 'pupil online learning page'. Your child's class teacher will provide a weekly activity grid that outlines the daily lessons and resource links that your child needs to complete their learning. Your child can also click on the MS Teams icon to access their class resources and remote teaching. Your child's class teacher will forward a 'meeting link', in your child's MS Teams calendar, prior to remote lessons taking place. Guidance on using MS Teams is available on the 'pupil online learning page'. A video tutorial has also been added to help parents with this.

3. I'm having technical problems logging into the remote teacher sessions. What can I do?

Please be patient and keep trying. We will try to resolve any technical issues as quickly as we can. We anticipate that there will be a few teething problems as we get started with this but hopefully the whole process will become much easier and smoother as time goes by and everybody becomes more familiar with using this new form of technology. Remember, your child's class teacher is only human and may be dealing with several technical issues at the same time – whilst trying to teach! They are not IT technicians so please be patient with them if a problem does arise.

4. The remote lessons with the class teacher is lagging or cutting out. Why is this?

Remember that there will be a lot of children trying to log into MS Teams at the same time. The MS Teams software will hopefully cope well with this increase of online activity. However, there may be times when the software fails. This is out of our control. Again, we will try to resolve any technical



issues as and when they arise. Should a live teaching lesson completely fail then your child should still be able to follow the activities outlined on their weekly activity grid.

5. *I'm struggling to do my own work online whilst supporting my child. How am I supposed to get through it all?*

You're not, don't worry. I understand that your job is vital in keeping a roof over your head and providing for your family. Remember you are doing an amazing job just loving and supporting your child through a very difficult time. Minimising stress and supporting mental health is crucial at a time like this. We have tried to design the weekly grids and remote learning so that, with practise, your child will be able to spend some independent time learning and engaging with their teacher. Any additional support you can provide is a bonus. Your child will not fall behind as we will cover this learning again once school reopens fully.

6. *How can I support two or more children, of different ages at the same time?*

You can't. It's not possible to do this, so stop trying. If you have older children then try and encourage them to do bits of learning independently (online learning apps, keeping a written diary, completing learning grids, reading books etc.) whilst you support your younger children. If possible, try to do activities that they can all engage in such as reading and discussing a story together, watching a science wildlife documentary on the television, developing fine motor skills through cutting, sticking or tidying up small toys etc. If your child is very young then encourage lots of imaginative play, the more independent the better. Hopefully, with daily remote interaction provided from your child's class teacher you will be able to get some time to organise what best suits your family needs.

7. *I have more than one child to home learn and I only have one laptop.*

If you are struggling with remote learning due to access to IT equipment, such as a laptop or Wi-Fi, please contact the school. We are working hard to support families when this issue arises.

8. *How is the school supporting the wellbeing of my child?*

We are acutely aware for the need to support the mental health of our pupils and families at this time. During this temporary school closure, your child's class teacher will regularly 'touch base' with all the children in their class who are working from home. This will provide an opportunity to discuss and address any pastoral issues. Additional weekly phone calls will be carried out if required. Further resources to support wellbeing can be found on our school website. If you require any further help or advice relating to this, then please do not hesitate to contact the school.



As always, the staff at St Mary Magdalen's will continue to work extremely hard to support you and your children, at this challenging time. Remember, you are your child's primary carer and educator. If you decide that, due to family circumstances, you cannot do all the work set then don't stress or feel guilty about this. If it's easier to support your children's learning, at times, in a more practical way like baking, tidying or gardening etc. then that's fine too. Home learning is not a competition and you should not feel as though you need to keep up with or compete with any other family. We are here to support you in any way we can, so please get in touch if required.

In the meantime, look after yourselves and take care.

Yours sincerely,



Mr. L.J. Duncan

