

30th March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

Some parents have asked whether Learn-AT schools will be offering online lessons via Zoom or a similar online platform. We have decided as a trust not to take this approach and wanted to share with you the reasons for this decision.

Online learning is a very exciting development and has huge potential for our schools in the longer term, and in normal circumstances. We have been using Microsoft Teams with most of our staff across the trust for almost a year and it is proving invaluable at the moment in supporting our internal communication and remote meetings between our central team and schools.

However, these are very complex and difficult circumstances and we wanted to avoid setting up unrealistic and unsustainable expectations. Teaching online is a very different experience to teaching in a classroom and would require considerable support and training for our teachers which we don't have the capacity to deliver at the moment. Some teachers are still working in school on a rota basis to provide care for key workers' children. Others are at home caring for their own young children or vulnerable/high risk relatives and fitting in school work around them, as many parents who are working from home are. Over the coming weeks and months it is likely that increasing numbers of our teachers will need to self-isolate or become ill themselves. All of these circumstances would make it very challenging for our schools to be able to offer consistent and high quality online learning.

We also took into account the needs of all of our children and families. It can be difficult for primary-aged children to sustain attention in front of a screen. We are also conscious that many parents are working from home whilst caring for their children, and may have children in more than one year group. We wanted to avoid adding additional stress to what is already a challenging situation for many by requiring children to be online at a particular time to watch a lesson. We also didn't want to disadvantage any families whose internet connection might not be fast enough to cope with live streaming or who might not have access to an internet-connected device for each child to use at the same time.

We chose the Learn-AT Home approach because all except a very small number of our families can receive emails, even if they don't have a computer or tablet at home. Emails can be read at a time that is convenient to the parent and the tasks are designed to be accessible to all and not require any resources or equipment that aren't easily available at home.

The Learn-AT Home Letter suggests tasks that children can complete at home even in the absence of the daily email (should the teacher be ill for example). We would like the children to read and write every day (for pleasure and as one of their three daily set tasks), to practise their number facts (number bonds/multiplication tables) and to learn key information from their current Knowledge Organisers. These are the most important things that all children can do to keep up with their learning at home.



BLABY STOKES CE PRIMARY SCHOOL



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ST ANDREW'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Learn Academies Trust

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We would like to stress again that if you don't manage to complete all of the activities **please don't worry**. Do what you can without it becoming stressful for you or your child. On the other hand, if you would like to do more there are lots of free resources available online which will support your child's learning. We have chosen not to send out lists of these to parents via email or our school websites or social media because we realise that this can easily become overwhelming.

We are still waiting for the government to announce the supermarket voucher scheme for parents who qualify for free school meals. We will share more information with you about this as soon as it is available. In the meantime please do complete the online form if you think that you might qualify for this scheme and haven't already applied:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=dQgwLceZsEO7Q_rFNhedWRgookmOvr9Mp_g3i2Hg37dUQjdNUFFXmk5BWEtNzZBNDQyR1RBTOYwUC4U. **Please can we stress again that we will never ask you to provide your**

bank details. If you receive any calls, emails or text messages asking for financial information in connection with Free School Meals, ignore and/or delete them.

The government has published some very helpful advice for parents about supporting mental health and well-being of children and young people during isolation which is available from

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing?utm_source=198a9e75-a418-4442-9102-7c714bd37c3c&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

We will continue to keep in regular contact with you all to share the latest information and guidance that we receive from official sources.

Yours sincerely



Stef Edwards
Learn-AT Trust Leader



Gill Weston
Chair of Learn-AT Trustees