



3<sup>rd</sup> April 2020,

Dear Parents,

As we approach the Easter holidays, I just wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for engaging with the home learning in the way that you have. Thanks again for all the messages of support and gratitude that have been sent in as they are really very much appreciated.

Our daily lives have changed in every aspect and we have all had to change and adapt to the current situation. I recognise the demands placed upon you in relation to home learning so I wanted to write to remind you of some resources that are available to help try and keep things in balance. The NHS Every Mind Matters website has some information about looking after your mental health and I have included the link here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>

I have attached a poster that offers parents ten ways to help support children cope with change. This poster will also be added under the Wellbeing tab of the school closure home learning area on the school website.

To further support you with your new role as Home Educators, I have included ten top tips courtesy of Teacher Toolkit. They are:

## 1. Mental Health

Our children's emotional wellbeing is the most important thing. If your child is feeling a bit wobbly, focus on this, not the academics. They will be mourning cancelled parties and closed parks. We don't know how long this will last for, so be sensitive to your child's feelings.

## 2. Adult Anxiety

Similarly, if you are feeling a bit wobbly yourself, put on your personal life-jacket first and look after your own wellbeing before panicking about your child's progress.

## 3. Parent Teachers

Teaching your own children is hard. It's certainly not something I ever wished to do! Just because you are qualified in the field, it does not mean that teaching your child will be easy, especially if they are not *generally* receptive to learning!

If you are secondary trained, it may not be easy to tap into how your 6-year-old learns and if you teach infants then you may find teaching a Year 10 pupil just as challenging. It is okay 'not to know' what you are

doing. Use this time as an opportunity to bond and remember that learning through play is appropriate at *any* age.

#### 4. Differentiation

Juggling different age children is a challenge. Both in class and at home and catering for all learners is a logistical nightmare. Give yourself a break, after all, who can do it perfectly, day in day out? You may have a detailed daily timetable or a be a person with no timetable at all. Both are fine! At the same time, you may wish to go off-piste with the home learning sent by your child's teacher...

#### 5. Managing Your Work

You are probably also working from home. Parents will forgive your children screaming in the background whilst video conferencing. These are challenging times. You cannot be a perfect home educator as well as meet the demands of facilitating your pupils' learning.

#### 6. Individualised Tuition

Your children are getting much more feedback than usual. If you have a child to adult ratio of 1:3 for example, your time is split 3 ways. This is a much higher ratio than a normal classroom, so, if you only spend 1.5 hours in a day on academic subjects, this is still more 1:1 time in comparison to a real classroom! I've never met any tutor who can sustain 5 hours of non-stop tuition...

#### 7. No Need to Hover

As teachers, we set children off 'on tasks' and expect some degree of independence. You can do the same. They probably don't want you breathing down their necks while they work. There's no need to hover; go easy on each other and set some time limits for space and work.

#### 8. Seek Support

There is a plethora of wonderful ideas on the web and children's teachers are rising to the occasion, doing all they can to help. Call a colleague and, if you need support, just ask.

#### 9. A Well-Rounded Curriculum

Use this opportunity to develop their wider curriculum by cooking, craft projects, household chores and building resilience, including getting creative online. We can shape the curriculum that we want for our children and none of us will ever get this opportunity again.

#### 10. The iPad is your friend!

There is still such a thing as too much 'screen time', but if you need it, use it, don't abuse it.

With the ongoing request for us all to stay at home, I am aware that this too can place a huge strain on family life so I have also attached Bromley's Directory of Services to remind you of the organisations that are there to offer support should the need arise.

The weekly home learning will resume again after the Easter break and, in the meantime, in amongst all this change and uncertainty, I sincerely hope that you all manage to find some time to rest and recharge.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Jackson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mr. S Jackson  
Head Teacher