

Parents' Guide- Supporting home learning

Guiding Principles

1. Maintain a routine

Help your child create a routine and try to stick to it. Making a timetable for each day will help to keep your child's learning on track and provide the necessary variety and breaks throughout the day. Design a routine that supports your child to continue their learning in all of their subjects, as well as building in time for enrichment activities such as reading.

Routine also allows your child to have a separation between their learning day and downtime. It is important that as much as possible, students still get up and dressed and ready for a day of learning and during evenings and weekends, they have the opportunity to pursue other interests.

2. Exercise and Activity

Physical exercise (as well as a healthy diet and sleep, including a regular time to sleep and wake) is recommended to maintain physical and mental health, and provides a vital foundation for effective learning. Many experts recommend 60 minutes of moderate exercise everyday (please adhere to government guidelines about being outside your home and social distancing). Why not begin the home school day with Mr Wicks' PE lesson? <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAxW1XT0iEJo0TYIRfn6rYQ>

3. Keep connected

When your child is at school, they are part of a large learning community with a shared ethos and set of values. There is a support network of staff and other students, which promotes a feeling of belonging. If possible you may choose to let your child communicate with school friends through the many and various online meeting platforms. Study groups, where students work collaboratively, is a great way to promote effective learning.

4. Keep learning

Support your child to try to maintain the good learning habits that have at school. We will be back at school at some point, we just don't know when yet. Don't worry, teachers are aware that there may be gaps in the children's knowledge and plans are already being made to address this. In the meantime, encourage them to keep learning and if they are struggling with new topics, it's still very valuable to go back over and revise previously taught material.

How do students learn effectively?

Research evidence shows that some of the most effective learning happens when these strategies are used:

1. Retrieval practice
2. Spacing and Interleaving
3. Dual Coding

What do these terms mean in practice? Here is a brief description of some specific tasks that could be done and links to further guidance:

Retrieval practice is the idea that students are regularly tested on the things they have learned. With repeated practice they will find it easier and easier to recall the knowledge they have been taught. Strategies to do this include:

- Flash Cards (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mzCEJvtED0U>)
- Past Papers (available from exam board websites e.g. <https://www.aqa.org.uk/find-past-papers-and-mark-schemes>)
- Explaining Ideas (take an idea that you have learned and explain the how and the why of it to someone else)
- Study Groups (with parental permission it can be helpful for students to discuss their learning with their school friends. This, of course, needs to be carefully monitored and the conversation needs to remain focused on the learning!)

Spacing and Interleaving is all about when you study/revise a topic. Leaving gaps and returning to a topic is much better than studying one subject in a single, larger block of time.

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eVajQPuRmk8>)

Dual Coding is about combining words with visual elements. This helps the brain to process the information and build links in a student's memory. Strategies to do this include:

- Diagrams (creating an annotated diagram of a topic is a good way to build memory)
- Mind Maps (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wLWV0XN7K1g>)
- Timelines (like diagrams these help the brain to build links which will help memory/revision)

Your child may have resources brought home from school (exercise books, topic booklets, past papers, textbooks, revision guides etc.) which could form the basis of their studies. However, you may feel that you need more than this and there are many excellent online learning resources, for example, Seneca Learning and BBC Bitesize.

<https://www.senecalearning.com/>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize>

YouTube is also a good source of free learning materials. For example, here's FreeScienceLessons, which is excellent for GCSE Science and also contains some helpful revision tips that could be applied to other subjects too:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqbOeHaAUXw9II7sBVG3_bw

Taken from the BBC Bitesize Website (5th April 2020):

How Bitesize will support you while you're learning from home

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zn9447h>

Daily lessons coming soon

Beginning Monday 20 April, BBC Bitesize will publish daily online lessons for all ages. We'll also have a new dedicated TV channel full of learning content, podcasts on BBC Sounds and loads of educational video on iPlayer.

BBC Bitesize is an excellent online resource covering a whole range of subjects.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize>

This includes short video clips, learner guides (notes, diagrams and information) and practice tests.

There are many other online resources – so much that it can be a little bewildering at times – but hopefully these suggestions will help you a little, as we all attempt to provide effective ways for our students to continue learning during these challenging times.