

The Downs Primary School and Nursery

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The Downs School News – Friday 3rd April 2020

Dear All,

I would like to start with a thank you. Nearly all parents have been sending a daily response to the email from the class teacher and this has made our job much easier. We all get two weeks off from doing that now, but please expect it to resume on Monday 20th April and remember to reply. The feedback on Twitter has been fantastic to see, you are clearly all doing an amazing job, the children all look happy and relaxed and they are getting involved – great life skills being learnt!

If you suddenly find out that you have been told by your employer that you have to go to work please email admin@downs.essex.sch.uk and your email will be forwarded so that I can support you in this. Passmores school will be open for the children of key workers and a member of our school staff will be their daily.

Thank you to those parents who have responded to the survey – we had 103 responses in one day and 93% said the daily email is useful, they like it and would like it to continue. After the Easter break, we are slightly changing the way we are setting work for your child to do. We will send an email out each Monday with all the learning required for that week and it will be themed. Each week the theme will change. This will allow households with more than one child to all be working together. The first theme will be 'Family', but more information will be sent to you on Monday 20th April. We will also add the work for each year group onto the website – same location as the other learning packs. We will also be posting out new workbooks for the children to use as we have had many emails telling us that children have already used up their first one – well done those children! We will post packs out to those who have no other means of seeing it. Please remember to look out for your email on Monday 20th April and please remember to reply to that email as we will not have heard from you for two weeks.

Reading - We all know that reading is an essential life skill and that it is important that we can read fluently and accurately. It is also a way to learn about the world and to relax. Reading a range of texts can help to widen our vocabulary and teach us about the world.

Oxford Owls have many free e-books online during the school closure. You will need to create a parent login to access these resources. Children can also listen to the stories. Visit [Oxford Owl](#) and use the parent page.

Twinkl have also waived their fees during the school closure and there are many phonics based activities available. <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/search?term=Phonics+mini+books>

Phonics - There are many apps and websites out there that parents can access. These are a few that are government approved -

Lingumi - Kids' English - Lingumi provides a course focused on spoken and communicative English. The app provides sets of learning games, speech recognition games and video-based games to help the child grow their grammar and get them speaking their first words.

Teach your Monster to Read - Teach Your Monster to Read is a phonics and reading game that's helped children learn to read. The app covers the first two years of learning to read, from matching letters and sounds to enjoying small books.

Navigo - The Navigo app aims to support beginner readers to develop reading skills (accuracy, fluency and comprehension) through engaging with the personalised content and activities.

Phonics Hero - Phonics Hero teaches children to read and spell with systematic synthetic phonics. The app includes over 850 fun and varied games. Using a step-by-step approach, children learn the 44 sounds, the reading and spelling of words, and how to conquer sentences.

Fonetti - Fonetti is a Listening Bookshop™ that provides young children with a patient, comforting listening ear to help in the learning-to-read journey, but also with the added benefit of tracking progress, identifying reading challenges, and highlighting to their adult carers where the most support is needed.

Maths - We are also pleased to say that we have renewed our Mathletics subscription. I expect there to be a lot of online learning and competition using this. If you do not know your log in details, please don't worry, we can email these to you if you ask your child's teacher.

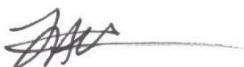
Hopefully the weather will warm up which can help with your mood and is more pleasant when you get out for that daily exercise. For now, we wanted to leave you with some ideas of activities for over the Easter period. This is not home learning or homework just some ideas:

- *On your daily walk take turns to take a photo and share this with family and friends asking them to guess the exact location or take a photo of something unusual, just a section of something and everyone has to guess what the picture is*
- *Make a family board game*
- *Make a matching-pairs set of countries and capitals*
- *Plant some seeds in empty pots and put them on your windowsill*
- *Decorate a boiled egg for Easter or make an Easter bonnet*
- *Make some rabbits or chicks out of empty food cartons*
- *Bake some shaped cookies and decorate them*

Save any photos for our Twitter feed when we return.

For now, stay indoors and stay safe.

Kind regards



Ms Jeanette Allen
Headteacher