



Dear parents,

We all hope you are staying well and safe in your homes. We miss the busyness of our classrooms and the funny stories that we usually hear every day but we know that this will not be forever.

As you are aware, every week we will be adding ideas of how you can help your child learn at home whilst school is closed. These activities are to work alongside the pack that was provided on the last week in school. However, we would like to remind you that you are not 'home schooling' and there is no expectation of amount of time spent on 'academic' activities. At St Thomas' our Early Years Foundation Stage belief is based on evidence proving that children learn best through play. Our daily timetable at school consists of short, active carpet sessions for the children to participate in. These lessons are 20 minutes Maths, 20 minutes Phonics and 20 minutes Topic carpet times. If you can mirror this amount of time at home, then this is wonderful. We certainly do not recommend spending longer than this on focussed learning.

However, if you cannot spend this amount of time per day then please do not panic! Recently we read a passage that matched our EYFS ethos at St Thomas'. It stated,

'Arguing with your kids to do work is not what anyone needs right now. Instead, cuddle up together and read, read, read. Take turns reading. Read them your favourite novel (yes you can read novels to small children). Do a puzzle. Build a fort. Bake. Watch TV together. Paint. Get out the Lego and build together. Set up a tent in your living room and camp out. Look at photos of when you were a kid. In other words... Don't stress about them forgetting. Don't stress about home schooling them. Just spend time together. Your kids will not learn much if they are feeling stressed. Though this is a scary time, it could be very well be a time they remember as the best time in their life'.

Our main focus, certainly in the short term, is ensuring that every child feels supported, happy and safe. Please remember that your child is learning more than you know by being with you in just the smallest of tasks.

Try to enjoy this time together and focus on your own well-being too. Remember when the world seems a dark and scary place, look at it through your child's eyes. Then the magic of this world and all the positive things that they see will bring your smile back!

Best wishes to you all,

Your Early Years Foundation Stage Team