



Cardinal Newman Catholic Primary School



Home Learning for Summer 1 at Cardinal Newman

Dear Parents

Happy Easter to all our children and families! What a very strange time it has been! I hope you have been able to enjoy some family time together over this most unusual Easter break and have had the opportunity to reflect together on the story of Easter – despite not being able to go to church to celebrate Easter Sunday this year.

Our parishes in the diocese of Arundel and Brighton – including our own St Erconwald's – streamed all of the Easter celebrations and we continue to be blessed to have the opportunity to participate in Mass virtually in our own homes! I saw a great meme on Twitter with the devil gloating over God, saying, "I've closed churches in every town" and God replying, "and I have opened a church in every home." How true!

Opportunities for prayer and reflection are so important for all of us at this difficult time – I commend to you Pope Francis's prayer for protection against coronavirus which you can find here: <https://www.sacredspace.ie/pope-francis-coronavirus-prayer> . We cannot all be NHS workers or 100 year old heroes, but we can all pray for NHS workers, for those who are victims of Coronavirus and for those who are anxious at this very challenging time.

As we begin a new term, you will be receiving from your class teachers a weekly newsletter with the suggested optional timetable for Home Learning in the Summer Term.

We say **suggested and optional** because we are very conscious that we have 300 families with very different children, lifestyles, expectations and capacities. **This is in no way a must do.** Home Learning is challenging for everyone – none of you chose to do it, but it is what the situation demands of all of us. Some parents are trying to work a ten hour day with their children at home; other families want to have the freedom to teach their children different things while the opportunity presents itself. With the best will in the world it won't be easy for any family - Primary children are not old enough to manage on their own all day and everyone will be having to work doubly hard to manage their own family situations. All of us are trying to find the best way to make this work for our own families and school staff are working hard to support you as much as we possibly can.

Having listened to what families told us they needed, we have structured **an 8:40 – 3:30 “school day” timetable**. Every day has year group specific resources for English and Maths, based on the schemes we regularly use in school. There are also specific weekly RE resources based on the diocese scheme. These all have clear input and activities to complete. In addition, there are Phonics / Spelling and Mental Maths slots to maintain the key foundation skills – you may choose to continue Spellings and Tables tests if you wish to. Daily reading is probably the most important activity on the timetable – if the children do nothing else at all, please do read with them for half an hour every single day.

Following feedback from families with several children, we have chosen to follow the **Xavier model for afternoon activities** – this means the whole family have the same activity to work on together and obviates the need for setting up Art materials three times a week or trying to support one with Art, one with Science and one with Music all on the same afternoon. The activities are skills-based and can be tackled at the individual child’s level. Some are child-led and they can follow their own interests. All are broadly National Curriculum based. Furthermore, year groups beyond Foundation Stage have additionally provided activities which are year group specific and not timetabled. This provides a further element of choice.

For some subjects, there **are separate logins for activities** – these include Charanga (Yumu) for Music (which is the scheme we usually follow in school) and Purple Mash for Computing (this is a very expensive scheme which we don’t usually have access to, but which has been made free to access during the school closures – please make good use of it as we are highly unlikely to be able to continue the subscription once charging begins again!!). You will receive your login details separately for these subscriptions in the next few days.

I can’t emphasize enough that there is no right way to do this. ***Please do what suits your child and your family situation.*** It would be beneficial if every child could do **some Maths and some English every day**. Beyond that, there is no hard and fast rule. If they happen to do those activities between 6am and 8am, then spend the rest of the day following their own interests, that is fine. Equally, if they work best from 4pm to 6pm, that will be fine as well. If it suits you to follow the school day timetable very strictly, that’s great. It’s there for you to use if you want to. If you have a different timetable which works better for your family, do use it!

Learning works best when the child is very motivated to do it. If you’d rather swap in History topic research (or baking or trampolining) instead of Music one afternoon, please do that. If your child is keen to spend every afternoon on Music for a couple of weeks, well, why not! We have sought to give you a clear structure with an element of choice so that you can make the learning work for you and your child. If they are busy with photography or painting or Lego models, that’s self-motivated independent learning and strongly to be encouraged! If you or they have a much better idea about what they want to learn or research or undertake, let them follow that curiosity. If you’re not sure what to do, follow the plan as it is given – it is well-balanced and straightforward to follow.

Please be reassured that the teaching staff are well aware of the difficulties for the children (and parents!) of learning at home. We know that many families are trying to support several children with their learning, often alongside working from home themselves, and we know too that there are many other pressures on some of our families: physical, emotional, mental and financial. In these challenging circumstances, we are very appreciative of the enormous support shown to school staff by the wider school community and of the great efforts parents are making to support their children in their home learning. It will never be easy (if it was, there would be no need for schools at all!) but we will succeed if we all work together to do the very best we can for our children.

Our teaching staff have been working hard to prepare resources for our return to school and to support parents with the challenges of home learning. If you're not sure about anything, please mention it to your class teacher when they call to speak to you. We will do our best to help. Staff are already prepared to fill any gaps when we do come back into school later in the year and we will do our best to ensure that no-one is disadvantaged by this most unusual of situations. In the meantime, the most important thing you can do as parents is to look after your children's physical and mental health; support them as best you can to be healthy and happy and learning new things with curiosity and enjoyment – that is what Primary School is all about!

All best wishes

Catherine Burnham