



17 April 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

Home Learning in the Summer Term 2020

I do hope you and your families are safe and well.

As we look to the start of a very unusual Summer Term, I wanted to write to thank you all for your understanding and support through this period of school closure. We really appreciate how difficult it will have been for those of you who might be working from home whilst also supporting your children with their learning - all during a time of confusion and anxiety.

Despite the challenging circumstances we all find ourselves in, teaching staff are reporting that many children are engaging with the activities they have set very well and we thank you for supporting them to be able to do this. Don't forget, all the work set is at www.orchard.emat.uk. I thank those of you who have been in touch on Facebook or through our ParentSupport@orchard.emat.uk email address to show us some of the brilliant things your children have been doing at home. A poster made by one of our Year 6 pupils about staying at home to protect the NHS made the front cover of our Trust's staff newsletter last week because it was so good! Teachers have been posting pupil's work on the school website in each year group's 'Gallery' page so keep your photos coming in!

Many families nationwide have said that they are finding the situation very difficult and problematic, and we would like to reassure you all that we totally sympathise. We will do anything we can to help - please don't forget you can call the school office, message us on Facebook (search @OrchardAcademyMK) or email ParentSupport@orchard.emat.uk if you have any queries. It is important for children and parents/carers not to become worried about pupils 'falling behind'. These are unique circumstances and families across the whole country will be finding similar problems. We have to accept that there will be 'catching-up' to do when this situation is resolved, and there may have to be some adjustments made nationally to recognise the difficult circumstances through which pupils in all schools at all ages have worked. Until then, we will continue to support you all as much as we can, so do get in touch if you need to.

The Government have said that the nation will remain in 'lockdown' for at least another 3 weeks. We still do not know at this stage when the school will be able to fully reopen so we are writing to inform you how we intend to set work from the start of the upcoming term.

I hope the following 'Frequently Asked Questions' will answer any queries you may have and set some expectations for your child's learning.

Headteacher: Mr C. Brown. Assistant Headteachers: Mr L. Bartishel and Mr J. Wilson.
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Telephone: 01908 670681



East Midlands Academy Trust is a company limited by guarantee registered in England & Wales No. 08149829
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Trust.





How will you be setting my child's work each week?

We are following national advice regarding home learning in primary schools and at present we will not be offering any 'virtual lessons' or contact. This is for several main reasons. The biggest challenge has been that there was no time to train everyone (staff, parents/carers, children) in how to access the technology. Using methods which we knew were easy to use and reliable for all seemed to be safer than experimenting with new technologies in an already stressful situation. In addition, not all pupils have access to technologies which could receive such lessons and many households have siblings sharing their electronic devices. Therefore, setting up online lessons at specific times would not work for most families. There are also safeguarding issues that we need to consider with online platforms providing opportunities for people to 'see' into each other's houses as well as the potential for sessions to be recorded, edited and then posted online. Finally, we have to consider that school is still open to vulnerable children and those who have 'key worker' parents so some staff are still in class. Like many of you, other teachers are working from home and many are looking after their own children at the same time, which means they may not be able to stay online, undisturbed, for fixed periods throughout the day.

Home learning will therefore continue to be set throughout each week on our school website. On our home page in the dropdown menu you will see a tab called 'Coronavirus – home learning'. We have split the learning into year groups and there will be English, maths, science, French and topic activities to do, along with links to websites. The learning will be through a variety of activities so all children can access them and use the knowledge and skills they already have to complete them. If you feel your child would benefit from the learning in another year group and that it is best suited to individual needs, then please choose the appropriate activities for your child. We want to ensure that your children are successful at home and enjoying their learning.

If you are unable to access the website, please contact the school office by telephone and we will be able to support you in getting work to your child.

How much work will my child(ren) be expected to do?

As parents you know your children and they need both learning and leisure time. Remember, a school day is broken into chunks and learning into small steps. Some schools have been issuing timetables for home learning. I personally do not think this is a great idea as every family will be different in their ability to stick to these. In some cases, it may simply be impossible to stick to rigid timetables and may cause unnecessary stress! This said, consistency and routines will be very important so it may be worth drawing-up your own 'family timetable.' Breaks and rewards will be very important. **A few hours of quality, focused learning over a day is going to be a lot better for everyone than six hours of negativity!**

We suggest you encourage your child to access at least one activity from the English, Maths and Topic activities each day as a minimum. Remember you can also include simple Maths and English in everyday tasks, for example measuring for cooking, counting how many jumps or hops you can do and reading labels and instructions. There are also online learning websites to access and I know some of you have been Sumdog Stars!

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Will the work be marked?

As you can appreciate, for logistical and practical reasons the teachers will be unable to mark work, but your child will be given an opportunity to share what they have done both through Facebook and ParentSupport@orchard.emat.uk, as well as with their teacher when we return to school.

We are going to be offering videos of our teachers doing some lessons and stories and there will be links to these on our website in the coming weeks.

Thank you for your continued support and my very best wishes go to you and your family,

'Together, we will achieve.'

Mr. C. Brown
Headteacher
Orchard Academy

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