



Dear Parents and Carers,

We find ourselves in a strange and difficult time, but Ark Alexandra staff are here to support you in whatever way we can. Work, communication and ideas will be continually uploaded on to Show My Homework and the School Website. Students can post questions to teachers on Show My Homework and other remote learning platforms different classes are using (Hegarty Maths, Google Classroom etc.) You will also receive regular phone calls from our staff as a way of ensuring that we continue to support you and to check in.

In the Student Curriculum Folder on the Alexandra SharePoint, we have shared all the amazing resources to promote positivity and wellness that we have received from our colleagues in other schools and institutions.

*Below are our top tips for effective home learning.*

## **Create a timetable**

At school, students thrive on structure. Every week they follow the same pattern of hour lesson slots. You could try:

- Creating a timetable of hour slots, including time for physical activity such as PE or dance, quiet activity such as drawing or meditation, interaction such as family time or phone calls, getting outdoors, Show My Homework tasks and Reading (you can access books for free online from East Sussex Libraries and websites such as Novel Free Read)
- Setting a timer (on your phone, an alarm clock, the oven) to go every hour to mark the end of the 'lesson'
- Assigning roles -older children can supervise or lead exercise classes etc, take it in turns to be the chef, the cleaner, the teacher...

## **Stay Connected**

Technology offers us many ways to stay connected so encourage your children to call and face time their friends and relatives. Be mindful of establishing boundaries and limits with regards the amount of news and social media consumed and screen time as the overwhelming amount of 'crisis news' can cause anxiety.

Why not try:

- Writing social time into your daily timetable
- Having dedicated phone time and phone free time
- Using apps and tools such as Skype or House Party to have virtual group meals, lessons or dancing sessions with other friends and families



## Get Online

There are so many brilliant and free online learning platforms. We will publish a separate list of recommended websites for different subjects. For now, we recommend:

- Audible for free audiobooks for young people.
- Themathsfactor.com
- Duo Lingo
- BBC Bitesize
- Seneca Learning
- East Sussex Libraries

## Stay Well

Whilst isolating at home it is important to look after your physical and mental wellbeing -allow yourself plenty of exercise and relaxation to help stay positive and healthy. Why not try:

- Taking part in Joe Wicks' daily PE lesson on YouTube at 9am every weekday
- Playing music for a family sing and dance one a day (perhaps you could run competitions and the winner gets to pick the song)
- Going for a walk, run or cycle outside once a day
- Connecting yourself and your young people to certain meditation or mindfulness apps such as Headspace, What's Up, MindShift, DownDog Yoga

## Be Creative

To live well, learn well and stay well it is important to find time for creative expression. Why not try:

- Scheduling art and drawing activities into your day -self-portraits, junk modelling with items from the recycling box
- Making up stories, play and characters throughout the day either formally (story time) or informally (all pretend to be detectives looking for clues as you tidy up the house)
- Contacting Mr Whitehead about taking part in the Arts Award scheme to get creative and win a nationally recognised award



## Have Fun

Although this is a very stressful time, it is also an opportunity to enjoy some quality time with your loved ones. In the midst of working, learning and keeping your home running, why not try:

- Playing board games
- Organising a sports day
- Making videos to post to friends and relatives
- Using some of the ideas we have suggested in the fun family learning activities sheet.

We know that you and your young people will be anxious, so please do turn to us or to other services listed for support. We know that students will be concerned about gaps in their learning, so please encourage them to keep logging on and trust that we will refine our working processes as this situation continues.

## For now, stay well, keep learning and enjoy some advice below from our staff:

*“Once the house has been tidied up and the kids are ready for bed, we put on an Afrobeats track (the baby’s choice) ...or the Hokey Cokey and dance in the living room. Sometimes friends in other homes Skype in for a dancing party.”* Ms Madziva

*“I am finding that sticking to the school day is helps to make working from home more manageable. I am trying to keep my breaks to when the school breaks are to keep me on track and so far it seems to be working!”* Ms Atherton

*“Being able to sit down all together for dinner at the end of the day as a family, as we are all home, is the experience I will treasure from this period. Healthy debates and conversation at the dinner table is something I remember from my childhood.”* Ms Horton

*“My top wellbeing tip is to start your day with some morning yoga. Try this 10-minute workout for beginners on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VaoV1PrYft4>”* Ms Bessa

*“Get up at the usual time, drink plenty of water, use the breaks to get the sun on your face. Find a view and stare into the distance to relax your eyes from the screen. Talk to people, don’t always message. Hold a smile, it makes you feel better. If you feel bored, learn something new or get some exercise; both work great.”* Mr Clarke