

Pownall Green

Primary School

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3 April 2020

Dear Families,

It is hard to think that it is only the second week that the decision was made to close schools across the UK. We are thoroughly enjoying caring for the children of key workers but, of course, missing the children and families we would usually see on a daily basis.

Our teachers have been working hard to develop new ways to continue that all important communication with their classes and parents, to be able to see first-hand what the children who are working at home have been up to. We must say how impressed we are at how the children are adapting and embracing home-learning.

Home learning is very much in its infancy and there are a huge range of factors that need to be considered. Our teachers have been working hard, as part of a whole school team, to develop a consistent Pownall Green home-learning approach. There will inevitably be hiccups along the way as we learn from each other what works and what doesn't.

We are developing a whole school approach as to how we can take home-learning forward.

We always welcome feedback from families. Some of the feedback has had common themes and in response our Senior Leadership Team have put together a series of frequently asked questions. We hope the following information will be useful to you.

Thank you for support and for bearing with us whilst we continue with these developments.

Why are you using Padlet?

Padlet works like a cork board by facilitating children to post notes in a common place. It allows them to share images, videos and different documents, giving them a window into each other's lives and keeping them in touch with one another. This works well for our school because:

- Padlet is an accessible platform that is easy to navigate and communicate through.
- It is a simple platform but has potential to be developed further. For example, by posting a variety of media types and organising it in different ways.
- Our teachers were able to be trained quickly and easily to use the platform with the limited time we had to prepare for closure and are now all confident to use it.
- Our teachers can continue to work collaboratively with their year group partners, uploading and sharing work-load as they would usually do in school.
- If a member of staff was to become ill, their year group partner would be able to continue to upload and provide continuity for the children.
- Padlet allows the support staff to see what the children in their year group have been doing.
- Padlet allows children to view each other's work. Children can therefore continue to learn from and with their peers as they would in school.

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Reception are using Seesaw, why can't the rest of the school?

Seesaw is a platform that our Reception teachers already have in place. They are already familiar with it and had been trained on how to use it effectively. This is in part why they have found the transition to home-learning easier than other year groups and are more confident in using it to post different media types.

Padlet has the potential to transfer best practice from Seesaw without the additional time to set up user permissions, logins and provide training for teachers.

Another consideration has been that the content in Seesaw needs to be uploaded to both classes separately. Whilst this is workable when there are only 2 classes such as in reception, this could become an issue if more year groups were using it and teachers were to become ill, or is required to care for a sick family member. This unfortunately is something that we have to prepare for.

Is there a way to make accessing Padlet easier?

Each year group has links to Padlet attached to their year group '**news**' page which can be accessed through our school website. You only need to access the Padlet page once and then bookmark the page on your browser.

Chrome: Click the star on the right hand side to add a bookmark and click 'done' to complete.

Microsoft Edge: Click the star on the right hand side and add to favourites.

Safari (iPhone): Click the little box with an arrow in it and add a bookmark.

How do I upload to Padlet?

Uploading to Padlet is very easy. Please follow the links below.

Computer <https://youtu.be/aHzn7y1bz3g>

Phone <https://youtu.be/gVIHkAMPGFI>

Can all teachers read stories to the children?

Reading stories is something that all teachers love to do. We are currently researching copyright laws and how different publishers and authors are relaxing usage rules during the current crisis. We are providing teachers with information about what this means with regards to recording the reading of materials and publishing online without infringing copyright laws.

Can teachers upload video lessons or post video clips of themselves?

This way of working is very new for teachers and to some the mere idea of videoing themselves is stressful. In this time of crisis, the wellbeing of our staff is paramount. We are working with teachers and listening to

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them about what they feel comfortable to do, respecting individual differences whilst establishing a whole school approach to home learning.

Do I have to do all the work set?

No. Teachers will upload work to their home learning page which can be downloaded, printed or looked at online. It is suggested that children try to complete one maths, one English and one other topic each day. We appreciate that it might be difficult to facilitate learning from home depending on your circumstances. Recreating the school day at home is not possible. What is most important right now, is the health and wellbeing of your family.

Take the pressure off and do what works for you.

I don't have a printer, what can I do?

There is no expectation to print anything off. Just write answers down on paper or discuss the answers with your children. Some children have been provided with home-learning books and some have also been advised to use their homework books or reading journals to record answers.

How much work do I send to the teacher?

This is entirely up to you.

A general guide would be to share your favourite pieces of work from across the week. Perhaps one maths, one English and one other topic, but if for some reason there is more or less, this does not matter.

We are always happy to hear from the children and families regardless of the work they produce. You can upload work to the Padlet 'stay connected' pages or if you prefer you can email them directly to the teacher via the year group email address.

What feedback will the children receive after submitting their work?

Teachers will reply to all emails and comment on the children's work. They may 'like' a Padlet post with or without a comment.

Will it just be worksheets posted on Padlet?

No. There will be a variety of activities set, for example, video clips to watch, games to play and challenges to complete.

Some of the worksheets don't open properly on my mobile device...

We are aware of this and have requested that all teachers save their uploads as pdf.

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How do we stay connected?

When children have completed an activity, are proud of something or just want to say hi, they are actively encouraged to do so via the 'Staying Connected' pages so that their teacher and year group can see it. We love seeing what the year group has been up to.

It is very easy to upload to Padlet from a phone or a computer. (Please follow the links above). They can also email their work and their teacher will reply. Just take a picture and send.

My child doesn't want anyone else to see their work, what can I do?

Just email it to the teacher, who will be happy to comment on it more personally.

What if a child writes something unkind about another child's work on Padlet?

All children at Pownall Green have been taught the online safety rules and how to be kind. All Padlet's have content filtering that removes unkind comments and changes them to positive emoji's! Teachers and phase leaders also monitor the Padlet pages daily.

I'm not a teacher, things have changed since I went to school. How do I help?

All the home learning we send to you is consolidation work and based on previous learning. We do not expect you to take on the role of teacher. These are unprecedented times and the most important thing is that you and your family are well. If an activity is too confusing or you don't know where to start, please email the teacher and they will be more than happy to provide advice and support.

Alternatively, you do not have to complete all pieces of work set. You could decide to do something different instead. For example, perhaps use this time to learn to tie shoelaces, bake, sew, paint, garden, write a letter to a relative or anything else your children want to try. Teachers are just as interested to hear about the development of these life skills as they are about the work set.

Remember we are here to help, please ask if you need us.

The work is too hard/too easy for my child. What do I do?

Please let your child's teacher know. They might be able to provide a differentiated activity or they will be able to advise you on where to source other material to support your child.

With increased usage of devices, how can I keep my child safe online?

Think U Know have released some useful summary guide sheets for parents for both primary and secondary aged children. You will find these at: <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/professionals/our-views/parents-helpsheets/>

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They also provide [fortnightly online safety Home Activity Packs](#) full of simple, 15 minute activities to support children's online safety.

Will my child fall behind?

In the current situation some of the national curriculum will not have been taught by the time the children come back to school. It simply cannot be helped and will be the challenge for the nations teachers when we return.

In the meantime, we would like to reassure you that we will be working as a school to ensure that we are prepared to take into account the diverse range of experiences that the children will have had as we return to school.

And finally...

All the staff at Pownall Green are committed to do their very best for the children and families during this national crisis. We will continue to work together to ensure that there is continuity of learning across school and most importantly that we keep ourselves and our families safe and well.

We thank you for your patience, support and understanding at this very difficult time.

Stay safe and look after each other.

Yours sincerely,

Pownall Green Senior Leadership Team