

Monday 23rd March 2020

Dear Brecknock Parents,

Special message from Cal and her team at Brecknock

I saw this at the weekend and it resonated well with what I believe. Please take the time to read and digest as you can.

'I would like to share some thoughts with you. You might be inclined to create a minute-by-minute timetable for your children. You may have high hopes of hours of learning, including online activities, science experiments, and book reports. You will plan to limit technology until everything is done!

But these are the things I want you to consider...

Our children are just as scared as we are right now. Our children not only hear everything going on around them, but they feel our constant tension and anxiety. They have never experienced anything like this before. Although the idea of being off school for weeks on end sounds exciting for some, they are probably picturing a fun time like the summer holidays, not the reality of being trapped at home and not seeing their friends.

Over the coming weeks, you may see an increase in behaviour issues with your children. Whether it's anxiety, or anger, or protests that they can't do normal things - it will happen. You will potentially see more meltdowns, tantrums, and oppositional behaviour. This is normal and expected under these circumstances.

What children need right now is to feel comforted and loved. To feel like it is all going to be okay. That might mean that you need to tear up your perfect timetable and focus on giving them lots of love and attention. I know this may be hard if you have the added pressure of trying to work at home with the children there. Please try to play outside and go on walks. Bake biscuits and paint pictures. Play board games and watch movies. Do a science experiment together or find virtual field trips of the zoo. Create a fitness circuit in your garden. Start a book and read together as a family. Snuggle under warm blankets and do nothing.

Don't worry about them regressing in school. Every single child is in this boat and they all will be okay. When we are back in the classroom, we will focus on their learning and meet their educational needs. Teachers are experts at this! Don't pick fights with your children because they don't want to do any activities. Don't scream at your children for not following



the timetable. Don't insist on 2 hours of learning time if they are resisting it. See if you can make learning fun through their play.

If I can leave you with one thing, it is this: at the end of all of this, their mental health will be far more important than their academic skills. How they felt during this time will stay with them long after the memory of what they did during these weeks are gone. So keep that in mind, every single day.'

I think this reflects our inclusive nature well and totally reflect my feelings about the importance of children feeling happy and safe above all else.

One thing I have heard from various members of our wonderful community is that, when all of this is over, we will need some closure on this academic year. Please be reassured this will happen in one context or another. Until then you are very much part of our community and your children are still members of their class. We are looking into ways we can continue to connect as classes and a wider community. This will mainly be via our regular emails, weekly phone calls and the information on our website.

Thanks for all of your on-going support; you are all in our thoughts and hearts.

Cal Shaw
Headteacher