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Dear Parents

Thank you to every member of the Fir Tree community for your patience, support and contribution to this first full week of Remote Learning. I'm sure I speak for everyone when I say what a rollercoaster the first full week has been!

For those children working at home, parents please know that I appreciate how difficult this situation is; I have three children at home myself from ages 6 – 12 and it is a real juggling act! The Government have set much higher expectations in this lockdown than before, putting more pressure on staff and you at home. You will have heard that the Education Secretary has told parents that Ofsted will be monitoring schools and their remote learning. To this end, Fir Tree will continue to provide and publish work each week that we believe fully meets the Government requirements.

They are recommending that pupils receive the following amount of teaching/learning a day:

- **Key Stage 1:** 3 hours a day on average across the cohort, with less for younger children
- **Key Stage 2:** 4 hours a day

That said, please do what you can, whilst keeping your own balance and wellbeing; you all do an amazing job. If you do not get everything done one day, that is fine. And certainly please do not work after 3pm daily, it's not conducive for you or the children. Teachers are trying their very best to support you and provide resources that make it easier for you to set your children off on work and help explain concepts. They are, as you know, contactable within school hours via email. Teachers are currently not getting their normal PPA or Leadership time. To help with this we are intending to make Fridays a lighter touch to allow staff a couple of hours to plan for the week ahead.

In addition to this here is some additional advice that may help, **be realistic about what you can do**. You're not expected to become teachers and your children aren't expected to learn as they do in school. Simply providing your children with some structure at home will help them to adapt. Use the tips below to help you make this work for your household (and please let us know if things are difficult) Experiment in this first week, then take stock. What's working and what isn't?

- Ask your children, involve them too
- Share the load if there are other adults at home.
- Split the day into 2-3 hour slots and take turns so you can do your own work where possible
- Take care of your own health and wellbeing (remember the advice on airplanes to put your own oxygen mask on before helping others)
- This will be new for your entire household, so give it time to settle.
- Create and stick to a routine if you can. This is what children are used to. For example, eat breakfast at the same time and make sure they're dressed before starting the 'school' day – avoid staying in pyjamas!
- Involve your children in setting the timetable where possible, perhaps look at the class one on the website and use as a starting point. It's a great opportunity for them to manage their own time better and it'll give them ownership and let them know what is happening

each week – [these will be on the home learning page the week prior to help you organise your week.](#)

- Check in with your children and try to keep to the timetable, but be flexible. If a task/activity is going well or they want more time, let it extend where possible
- If you have more than 1 child at home, consider combining their timetables. For example, they might exercise and do maths together – see what works for your household
- Designate a working space if possible, and at the end of the day have a clear cut-off to signal school time is over
- Distinguish between weekdays and weekends, to separate school life and home life

Please note that whilst we have put together a structure for the timetable day, we understand that in your own family you may have found or be working to find a routine that works best for your own circumstances and so you may wish to run the day in a different order to suit you e.g. doing PE / fitness at a time to suit the whole family.

We are aware of families where there are challenges regarding access to suitable devices at home for remote learning and we are working hard to secure laptops that can be loaned to families who are eligible, as I mentioned previously we have only received 3 to date. I am delighted to tell you that the Greenham Trust have donated £3800 this week to help us purchase laptops for those who are disadvantaged and not accessing or struggling with remote learning. I look forward to updating you further with more details as they come.

If you require any writing materials such as paper or exercise books to support the children's learning at home, there will be a supply available from the office on Mondays from 1pm. Please email office@firtree.newburyacademytrust.org with details of what you need so that we can organise this before you come – please don't just turn up as we need to account for all visitors.

As previously mentioned, the school is also required to monitor every child's engagement with remote learning and continue to ensure children are making progress. Our remote learning will enable us to do so as long as children/ parents engage. My leadership team will be contacting parents next week to ascertain any issues that there may be where we have yet to see evidence of engagement. Please contact your class teacher if you are unable to access Teams as staff will be recording daily the engagement/attendance they are experiencing in line with the expectations of remote learning and may be able to assist in other forms otherwise.

Online video lessons do not necessarily need to be recorded by teaching staff at the school: Oak National Academy, White Rose, Pre-recorded or voiced over power points for example, can be provided in lieu of school-led video content and we hope that you are finding this helpful.

Occasionally, there may be more or less depending on the curriculum needs for that day. When Teachers are in school supervising children this style of teaching will be occurring at least once a day. Again, there may be more depending on the work for the day and the availability of staff being able to respond. May I remind you in the event of staff absence, Teachers will be required to attend school to cover colleagues. We will continue to review our provision on a daily basis, looking to make improvements and adjustments where necessary, within the challenges we are facing.

Behaviour During Remote Lessons

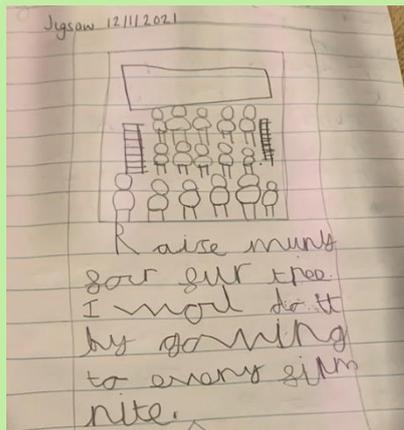
To ensure children working from home are fully engaged in our remote learning program during this lockdown period, it is important that children demonstrate the right approach to learning. We will be asking staff to nominate individuals who have demonstrated this level of engagement, so

we can keep you informed and celebrate this weekly through my assemblies.

Conversely, any child who disrupts the learning of others in a live lesson will, after a clear warning, be asked to leave their live lesson. In the event that this happens, we will notify you as a parent, and the teacher will later be in contact to discuss this with you. This also stands for inappropriate and acceptable usage of Teams. We have emailed out our Parent and Carer Commitment for Remote Learning and the Pupil and Parent Agreement for Online Learning today, and class teachers will also be discussing these with the children next week.

Remember to send me through any news or pictures that will help keep everyone's spirits up!

This week:



Well done to Megan in Year 2 who shared her fantastic PE



Nom, nom Beau (Year 2) and Penny (Year 5) had a delicious tea party as part of Year 2s French day last week!!

Thank you to Heath in Year 2 for sharing his PSHE work this week; his dream and goal for end of Year 2 - love this!!!

Congratulations to Logan in Year 4 who has achieved his 100 nights Reading - well done Logan, keep it up!

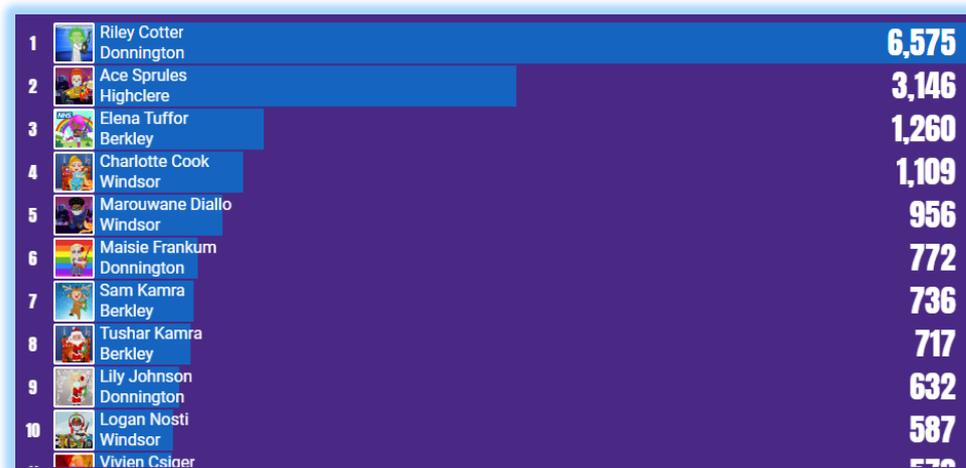
Millie in Year 5 has built an entire computer from scratch that she got for Christmas - wow! Well done Millie!



I'm also delighted to share with you the results of our Times Tables Rock Stars Battle below. Congratulations **Donnington!**



A huge well done to everyone who took part, with a special shout out to the children below for the points that they earned. Certificates are coming your way. Keep an eye out for the next battle coming your way soon!



Thank you for your ongoing support as we work together to make remote schooling work best for your son/daughter. We are in this together, staff in school are doing the best they can to get this right and I know parents at home are doing the same. Thank you for your continued support in this difficult time and I hope everyone gets to relax a little over the weekend.

Stay safe!

Best Wishes

Mrs L Wood
Associate Headteacher



"This storm is making me tired," said the boy
"Storms get tired too," said the horse, "so hold on."