



DOLLAR ACADEMY

Mrs Morrison: Junior School Term 3 Welcome

Dear Parents

I hope this email finds you and your families safe and well in these strange times. We are looking forward to welcoming your children back for the summer term in what is, for now, our virtual world, and I wanted to give a little guidance as to how we hope this will pan out.

The first thing I want to say is how well our Juniors seemed to cope with the initial trial days of virtual learning at the end of last term. That experience was really beneficial in guiding the staff as to what to plan going forward. We have taken a deliberately steady approach to home learning as we know that you will all be operating in different personal contexts, juggling your own work with family commitments and different digital learning set ups and accessibility. What we suggest has to work for you; we know that routine and structure is reassuring but we also want to provide the flexibility to pursue independent learning opportunities, as and when they arise. And please do not feel under pressure to achieve everything set out for your children – where their own interests take them, and you, is hugely important too!

I hope some of the following suggestions may be useful in planning the days and weeks ahead:

- A good 'get up, dressed and ready' routine is advisable, albeit perhaps a little later than normal; getting plenty of sleep is a positive by-product of this new home learning regime.
- If you can, try to set up a designated study area for your child and get them to independently stock it with the things they need to be ready to work (paper, jotters, sharp pencils etc).
- In the packs they brought home children should have any jotters or text books they need.
- The children were also issued with a paper timetable (a copy is attached). This is for guidance and designed to help structure the day. That said, a bit of physical activity might be preferable at the beginning of each day (Our PE teachers are providing ideas and I gather that Joe Wicks' daily workouts at 9.00am are proving very popular), it might suit you to do a bit of baking mid afternoon.....the plan is designed to be flexible which is why the work is being set for the whole week. Planning and distributing assignments through the week is down to the individual, but with the guidance of the timetable.
- At the beginning of each week it might be a good idea to print off the Work Overview which can be found in the File section each week. This gives a brief outline of the work for the week. Your child can then tick off each piece of work when completed. It may also help them plan their days.
- At the end of each week answers and marking schemes for markable tasks will be published in TEAMS for self marking or for parents to mark. Adopting a "two stars

and a wish" approach to marking – focussing on two good things and a target for improvement - may be a useful approach.

- In future weeks certain tasks will be required to be submitted on-line for teacher marking and feedback and further guidance will be given for this .
- Next steps will be teacher-led learning at certain times and for certain subjects via TEAMS and we are also working on the idea of having a Class time with the class teacher first thing on a Monday to set up the week, and another on Friday afternoon to round off the week. Further details will follow.
- We would recommend storing any loose work in a folder, which of course could be digital; do not feel the need to print everything off.
- We do not expect all work to be perfect but we do expect standards of presentation (including dates, titles and underlining for instance) to be maintained. Please ask your child, "Would Mr Mills be happy with this?" or "Is this how Mrs Letford expects it to be set out?".
- Do encourage self reflection – "What am I pleased with in this piece of work?" "What would I like to find out more about?" Write the question down and encourage further independent enquiry.
- 20 - 30 minutes concentrated effort with no distractions would be a good target. Set a timer. And remember that what is achievable in a 1:1 situation is very different from the expansive questioning and discussion that happens in a class situation.
- We find that a short period (15 minutes) of quiet, personal reading at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session is a good way of settling to the activities that follow. For breaking up the day's lessons there are plenty of good free website suggestions or perhaps some mindful colouring, sketching, touch typing practice (BBC dance mat) or any and all craft activities.

I hope these suggestions might be useful – there is no right or wrong way to go about this. Your children have two very solid terms of learning on which to build and they are all capable and resilient. Please do encourage them to take some ownership of this new way of learning – it will be incredibly useful to them in later years – and make sure they have a go themselves before turning to you for help. That said, we are all available to help you, and them, with any concerns, however small or silly they feel. Miss Pollock and Mrs Fraser Tilus will be monitoring and responding to questions on the Junior 1 and Junior 2 Team chats, which should be used only for learning purposes, and Mrs Neill and I are available at any time on the junior@dollaracademy.org.uk email address.

We would welcome feedback on how things are going and look forward to teaching and learning with you in the weeks ahead.

Kindest regards



Alison Morrison
Head of Prep and Junior School