



Alameda Middle School

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1st May 2020

Weekly Update

Dear parents and carers,

I hope that you are all as safe and well as possible – and looking after yourselves and each other. Learning of how the whole school and wider community is supporting each other remains both humbling and inspiring. We take great positivity from all of the work that is being undertaken at home and at school.

Whilst we have no timescale for how long school closures are likely to last, we are constantly trying to refine our practice to ensure that school work is accessible, manageable and interesting. Simultaneously, we continue to plan for the future, to ensure that as a school community, we emerge from this strongly and are ready to take on the future with the passion, enthusiasm and sense of community which so characterises our school.

Activities for Home Learning - Weekly Overviews

Thank you for your positive feedback on the weekly home learning overviews. The updated ones for next week will be added to the website. We do aim for all of the activities on Edulink to match with the overviews but where there is any difference, we encourage the pupils to choose the activity they prefer and feel would bring the most benefit. May I also remind you that you are welcome to contact your child's teacher if you have any queries.

We are continuing to work on the way in which activities are shared. Don't forget to look out for Alameda TV on YouTube.

Closure for Bank Holiday 8th May

School will be closed for the Bank Holiday on 8th May. If any key worker parents require support on this date, please contact us via email and we will work with other local schools and the Local Authority to ensure support is in place.

Helping Students to Stay Safe Online

As part of remote learning and the need for social distancing many students and families are spending much more time online. Please find below links to Government advice regarding online safety and details of a number of different organisations which can provide additional support and guidance.

- [Thinkuknow](#) provides advice from the National Crime Agency (NCA) on staying safe online.
- [Parent info](#) is a collaboration between Parentzone and the NCA providing support and guidance for parents from leading experts and organisations.

- [Childnet](#) offers a toolkit to support parents and carers of children of any age to start discussions about their online life, to set boundaries around online behaviour and technology use, and to find out where to get more help and support.
- [Internet matters](#) provides age-specific online safety checklists, guides on how to set parental controls on a range of devices, and a host of practical tips to help children get the most out of their digital world.

When thinking of more general safety advice, Hazard Alley, a safety centre that teaches students how they can stay safe, understand risks and avoid accidents, has an online virtual tour. There are tasks and games to complete at each section and makes learning safety fun and interactive. We have also added this to this week's learning overview.

The link is:

<https://my.matterport.com/show/?m=xzxCRCfEuHX&guides=0>

Something Different – from Miss Lamacraft

Many of you will know that Miss Lamacraft is a dog trainer outside her work at Alameda. Aware that many members of the Alameda community have dogs, she has set up a virtual training school for Alameda pupils. Parents will need to sign up for their children to take part:

Alameda Dog School

Do you and your child need a different sort of challenge for lockdown? Have you ever wanted to be a dog trainer? Then sign up now.

PLEASE NOTE: Parents and Carers, when you sign up to the course, use your child's name, as this is what will be printed on the certificate at the end.

Your child's task will be to train your dog in a few tricks, then film, edit and upload to a private Facebook group (Uploading only if you want to)

All instructions are available once signed up to the course.

Any problems contact me on the closed Facebook group (link inside the course) or secondly, on her school email (klamacraft@alamedamiddleschool.org.uk) and I will get back to you.

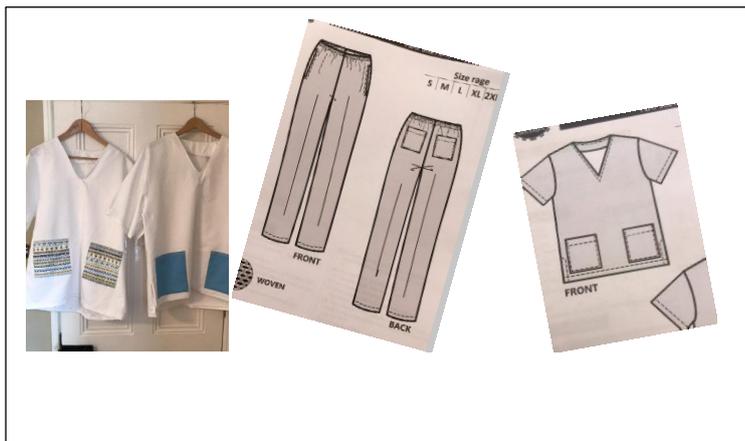
Enjoy, have fun and Stay safe

Kind regards
Miss Lamacraft

Sign up link:

<https://schoolfordogs.teachable.com/p/caninehub-alameda-dog-school>

Scrubs



Mrs Friend and others in the local community, are busy sewing, making scrubs for local nurses, Doctors and carers. They are in desperate need of **any cotton material that can be washed at 60 degrees.**

Mrs Friend will collect the material, implementing all the social distancing rules, from our area. If you think you have some old sheets etc that you would like to donate, please email

jfriend@alamedamiddleschool.org.uk

Thank you.

PGL and Ski trip Update

PGL - The finance team and Mrs Barrows, continue to liaise with Zurich Insurance Company. Parents have received an email informing them that SCOPAY will not be accepting any further PGL payments for the present time.

Ski trip - A letter was sent via group call earlier this week. In order to process money transfers, Mrs Haywood, our finance officer, requested your bank details. Thank you to all those who have completed these. There are a few people yet to do this, if you need Mrs Haywood's email it is: khaywood@alamedamiddleschool.org.uk. Money transfers will take place before the end of next week.

And finally

Thank you, as always for your unstinting and positive support of Alameda Middle School. On behalf of all of us here, we could not be prouder to be part of this community.

Stay safe

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Donna Leonard', written in a cursive style.

Donna Leonard
On behalf of the Alameda Leadership Team

Coronavirus: How do I home-school my children and what does Bitesize offer?

By Ben Milne
BBC News
20 April 2020

Coronavirus pandemic

Schools across the UK would normally be opening for the summer term about now.

However, they remain closed to all but a few pupils and there is no current reopening timetable. Most parents are now responsible for their children's education. For many, working from home and supporting their children's school work is not easy.

BBC Bitesize has launched a big push to help children - and parents - with home-learning, but what's realistic, and where can parents find support?

What can parents and children actually do?

First of all, there is little expectation that parents are able to replace teachers.

A **joint statement by the main teachers' unions** said that "we cannot home-school the nation's children". They acknowledged that many parents have their own complicated work patterns.

However, many schools provided learning packs when the lockdown started, and are trying to run some online learning - for this, they are relying on parents being able to supervise their children.

But what is more important, say educationalists, is maintaining a degree of normality, rather than worrying about a child's progress in English or maths.

Home-schooling for now is "about encouraging parents to help their children create regular routines and study habits", says Prof Becky Francis, of the UCL Institute of Education.

How do I support my children?

"Recreating the school environment is really tricky," says Helena Gillespie, professor of learning and teaching in higher education at UEA.

But there are things she suggests you can do to make the experience relatively rewarding and stress-free:

- Set a routine - if possible, have children dressed and breakfasted by 08:30 on weekdays - this will help them adjust when schools reopen
- Identify a set time of day when you will help children with projects, and other times when they can do things by themselves

- To avoid children losing academic skills they don't practise, including reading, writing and maths, make these the most important daily sessions

What resources are available?

The BBC has expanded content on its education service, **BBC Bitesize**, to provide **regular daily lessons in English, maths and other core subjects**.

BBC director general Tony Hall describes it as "the biggest education effort the BBC has ever undertaken". It includes:

- Bitesize Daily - six different 20-minute shows, each targeted at specific age groups from five to 14, covering maths, science and English, as well as subjects including history and geography
- more than 150 new lessons added every week to the Bitesize website and app
- advice for parents on home-schooling, and guides for pupils with special educational needs
- for older students, **BBC Four is showing evening programmes** to support the GCSE and A-level curriculum
- specific content for students in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The government has also announced that it is backing a new national online school, called Oak National Academy, to provide 180 hours of free lessons a week. It will offer content based on the curriculum, from Reception to Year 10, for teachers to use when planning remote learning. It also says **it will help provide laptops and internet connections** for some children in Year 10 who do not have access to a computer.

Other resources include YouTube's Free School, which offers a range of videos on topics as diverse as the US constitution, coral reefs and the solar system.

And **the organisation behind the Ted talks has a division called Ted-Ed**, full of "lessons worth sharing" from teachers around the globe.

Out of the classroom

Apart from missing lessons, it is important to remember that school has a social function for children. As with adults, children's relationships with their friends are heavily restricted by lockdown regulations.

Keep up communication with the school and encourage children to keep in contact with their friends as much as possible - something with which younger children may need more encouragement and support.

The Children's Commissioner's "digital 5 a day" campaign gives tips on how children can connect with each other, and look after their own mental wellbeing.

Try also using this time to help children acquire life skills - such as hanging out the washing or stacking the dishwasher. Make the most of the opportunity to talk to each other more, for example by trying to have lunch together every day.

When will children return to school?

There is currently no timetable for children to return to school in the UK before September, although this has not been ruled out.

A **paper by academics at University College London** recently questioned whether the closure of schools had any impact on controlling coronavirus. One of the authors, Prof Russell Viner, said its value should be weighed against the cost to children's education and mental health.

However, the government's chief medical officer, Prof Chris Whitty, responded that while schools were "not dangerous" for children during the pandemic, the decision to close them would slow the rise of infections.

In a move likely to be watched by other nations under lockdown, Denmark has now become the first European country **to start allowing children up to the age of 11 back to school.**

How much should we be doing?

Prof Gillespie says that much depends on how young the child is, but "if they can stay focused for between an hour and three hours, a day that would be fantastic".

Guidance from teaching unions suggests children do no more than three hours' work a day.

But Prof Gillespie says parents should not worry too much on how much time the child spends learning: "It's much better to have a really successful hour where the child enjoys their work, then watches telly."

It's important to know when to bail out, she says, if things aren't going well and everyone is getting frustrated, she advises. "Don't beat yourself up - you can pick things up again tomorrow.

"Children won't remember finishing that geography homework, but they will remember how it made them feel and what the vibe in the house was like."

Additional reporting by Ellie Lawrie