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Dear Parents/Carers

We hope this letter finds you safe and well. Please read this important message that has been read on social media and is one which we want you all to hear.

We all know that education is important, but mental health and well-being is vital during these unprecedented times.

You may have already devised a minute by minute schedule for your little people to follow, set up a learning space and prepared yourself for the pressures of home-schooling. You have high hopes of hours of learning, including online activities (which you may not be able to access due to an increase in demand), science experiments, and book reports. You'll limit technology until everything is done! But here's the thing...

Our children are just as scared as we are right now. They can hear everything that is going on around them, and will pick up on our tension and anxiety. Like us, they have never experienced anything like this before.

Although the idea of being off of school for weeks sounds amazing to them, they are probably imagining a fun time like during the summer holidays, not the reality of being stuck at home and not being able to see their friends.

Over the coming weeks, you will no doubt see a change in your child's/children's behaviour. Whether it's anxiety, or anger, or protest that they can't do things normally - it will happen. You'll see more meltdowns, tantrums, and conflicting



behaviour in the coming weeks. This is normal and to be expected under these circumstances.

What our children need right now is to feel comforted and loved. To feel like it's all going to be ok. And that might mean that you develop a more balanced and flexible schedule which helps to develop and maintain well-being. Play outside and go on walks (following government guidelines). Bake cookies and paint pictures. Play board games and watch movies. Do a science experiment together or watch webcams set up in zoos at feeding times. Start a book and read together as a family. Snuggle under warm blankets and sometimes do nothing.

Don't worry about them falling behind in school. Everyone is in this boat together and they all will be ok. When we are eventually back in school, we will meet them where they are. Teachers are experts at this! Choose your battles carefully, don't cause unnecessary stress with your children because they don't want to do maths at a certain time. Don't get annoyed at your children for not following the schedule. Don't insist on 2 hours of learning time if they are resisting it.

If we can leave you with one thing, it's this: at the end of this pandemic, your child's/children's mental health will be more important than their academic skills. And how they felt during this time will stay with them long after the memory of what they did during those weeks is long gone. So keep that in mind, every single day.

Keep safe and we look forward to seeing you on your return to school.

Yours sincerely

*From all at Pearl Hyde*

