



Lancashire Secondary Consultant Team

# **A Parent/carer Guide to Keeping on Top of Home Learning**

Learning at home can be trickier for your child than learning in school.

As well as doing the usual school work, your child has try to stay motivated and be more independent in their learning. These are quite difficult skills to master but can improve with practice.

Independence in learning is a key skill that will benefit all students as they approach examinations, as they progress to college or university and as adults in everyday life.

Guidance suggests parents and carers should encourage their child to be proactive in thinking about their learning and in dealing with any issues or concerns themselves, before asking teachers or parents to address the issues. This will aid the development of student independence.

**Please use this booklet as a guide to help keep your child's learning on track.**

**This guide is a follow on guide to [Helping Your Child Study During the Corona Virus Closure](#).**

One strategy this booklet refers to is the Brain, Book, Buddy, Boss strategy:

- **Brain** Try to figure it out for yourself first.
- **Book** Try looking it up in a book or using the internet.
- **Buddy** 'Phone a friend'. Can one of your friends or classmates help?
- **Boss** If you have tried the other three and if you are still unsure, contact your teacher.

This strategy encourages the student to try to be a bit more independent by providing them with a scaffold when they are stuck or feel they need help.

Remember though, if your child is struggling excessively with a piece of work, or if you have serious concerns about your child's education or well-being please do contact the school.

#### **How has it been going so far?**

Ask your child about how their learning is going.

Encourage your child to talk about what aspects of the day are going well and what they have done to make that happen.

If your child is stuck or struggling, encourage them to try the Brain, Book, Buddy, Boss strategy.

If your child's work is too easy, encourage them to discuss this with their teacher.

If they are not having success with a resource or strategy, encourage them to discuss it with their teacher.

Work with your child to identify what works best for them.

If they are avoiding a particular subject, try to find out why. If your child has spoken to the teacher and you still have concerns, contact the school to raise your concerns with them.

Strategies and approaches to learning may change for Y10 students as they return to school part time. When this happens, it is a good time to review how everything is going and what is working best for them.

Similarly, as other students return they will be working in different ways at school and home, so your child may need to adapt to new ways of working and new strategies. Discuss how things are going at this point.

### **Is your child getting the best impact for the effort they are putting into their work?**

Before they begin their learning for the day, ask your child what they know about what they have to do, how they are going to manage their time to build in breaks as well as learning time, and what resources they are going to use. Maybe use this EEF document as a starting point for discussion: [EEF: Planning the day](#). SEND students might respond well to a visual timetable of how the day or whole week could be broken up: learning, breaks and other activities.

Support your child with their routine.

At the end of the day, ask your child to tell you they have learned that day, which part they are most proud of, why they are proud of that achievement and what helped them to achieve it. Ask them about the logistics for filing/sending work to teachers, and how they are managing that.

Ask your child to try to identify something that did not go so well, and what they can do about it for next time.

Ask your child how you could quiz them to support their learning.

Ask your child how you could help them further.

Praise your child for specific achievements e.g. 'Well done. You have carefully thought about how to approach that.'

Ask your child about how they are feeling.

### **How well is your child learning and remembering things?**

Ask your child what they need to practise this week.

Offer to test them (for example, every other day for a week). This should be a quick 10 minute activity.

Congratulate your child on the things they are beginning to remember. Focus on their successes, including their resilience to keep revisiting what they do not yet know.

If they keep getting a particular thing wrong because they do not understand it, do not get stressed about it, just suggest they contact the teacher for guidance.

In any correspondence with the teacher, encourage your child to be honest and specific about what they are struggling with. Because the teacher is not seeing your child in class, this is the only way the teacher can assess how to best help your child.

### **How well is your child understanding the work?**

Try to ensure your child has access to a quiet space, with no or few distractions when they are watching or reading explanations, particularly for new work, skills, topics or concepts. When something is new, it is best to avoid all distractions, so no music, or TV etc. during the explanation and the first few practices of a new skill. (Once they are 'getting good at it, it's OK to have music in the background, but still better to avoid visual images like TV.)

If your child is struggling with something, suggest they look at any additional explanations, hints, resources, guidance or examples provided by the teacher.

Encourage them to look at explanations again if they are having difficulty with work.

Ask your child to try to explain in their own words what they have to do, or look at any examples or additional resources suggested by the teacher. (Again, the Brain Book, Buddy, Boss strategy is a good strategy to apply in this situation.)

Encourage them to have another go once they have used the additional guidance.

If they continue to struggle, ask your child to write down the exact part they are struggling with and to contact the teacher for suggestions or further help.

### **How can your child improve their work?**

Encourage your child to:

- read and act on the feedback they receive.
- apply the Brain, Book, Buddy, Boss strategy to feedback.
- consider what they would do differently next time in light of the feedback.

If your child is not getting feedback on work they have submitted, encourage them to consider the questions:

- Did I submit the work in the correct way?
- Is it past the due date?
- Has there been at least a day for the teacher to mark the work?

Encourage your child to contact the teacher if the answer to all three questions is 'yes'.

Allow a couple of days. If there is still no feedback, contact the teacher or school on behalf of your child.

### **Are they using the resources and technology they have effectively?**

If your child doesn't have access to electronic technology, such as a smart phone tablet or laptop and the associated internet access, then:

- Make sure the school knows and can set up alternative methods of working.
- Encourage your child to complete any work set.
- Work closely with the school to ensure work is collected/ sent and returned promptly.
- If opportunities for verbal support such as phone calls to help your child are available, encourage your child to engage with them.
- If an opportunity for your child to return to school becomes available, consider accepting the place as soon as possible.

If you have several children who need to access technology, but less devices than children, consider setting up a rota to take turns at using the technology. If the school is using a lot of 'live' lessons, it may be that you need to inform them of the limited availability of technology and perhaps request that, if possible, they record 'live' sessions so your child can access the 'lesson' at a later time.

If your child is making use of technology to complete home learning tasks, make sure they are accessing the appropriate work. Ask them if they are still able to access the work with ease, and they are submitting work in the manner requested by the teacher.

If you have any concerns about the quality or quantity of the work set either electronically or in any other format, please discuss with the school.

### **How much is your child discussing work with peers?**

To get the most out of learning, your child would benefit from the chance to talk to someone about their learning: to discuss concepts and ideas as well as ask questions.

If the school provides opportunities for your child to join 'live' online classes and discussion groups, and you have access to the necessary technology, encourage them to do so.

Encourage your child to discuss their work with their friends as well as their normal social interactions via the social media channels you allow them to use.

If you feel confident to do so and feel your child would engage well with it, discuss their work, ask questions about it and question their ideas and answers. (If this causes conflict, then don't do it. Some students don't feel confident about adults questioning their work/ reasons and can react defensively. If this happens it essentially stops any benefits the discussion could bring.)

Ensure you are aware of the school's safeguarding advice around 'interactive' school activities. Please check any video calls, forums etc. that have been suggested by the school.

If an opportunity for your child to return to school becomes available, consider accepting the place as soon as possible.

### **How can you help keep your child motivated?**

If you feel your child's routine has become a bit boring and your child is struggling to stay motivated, encourage them to try mixing it up a little by moving sessions/activities about. For example, if one day's learning plan involves lots of book or computer time, try swapping out one of the computer based 'lessons' for a PE session or more practical session.

Encourage your child to keep track of their progress. If needed, remind them of the successes they have had with home learning. Perhaps encourage the use of a learning diary or success board/ chart.

Encourage your child to set themselves challenges and targets, or you could set some. Try to make sure targets are challenging but achievable, for example

"Last time I tried this I remembered 5 of the characteristics of living things. Next time I'm going to remember all 7."

Set up family challenges or competitions (keep it light and friendly, not too competitive!). For example, a sports or fitness challenge, speed reciting of multiplication tables (times tables).

Encourage other activities as well as school work. A mix of activities works best for keeping it interesting and engaging.

Some people find a 'get it over with' approach helpful, so they do the things they like least first. This means they have nice things to look forward to.

Reward strategies can also help motivate some students. For example, you could use a 'half day Friday' as a reward for getting all the week's work done by Friday lunch time. The family could then have a walk, make popcorn together, followed by watching a film together.

Finding an appropriate reward that works for you and your child can be a good motivator for some students.

The activities in the diagram below can significantly improve your child's learning skills as they encourage them to think about their learning and how well it is going. These skills also help your child develop problem solving and organisational skills and help prepare them for the many decisions and situations they will encounter as adults. More detail about the strategies can be found [here](#).



