

Transition - for every year group

I am no expert on every individual year group however, I do have some knowledge and understanding about how to support children going through change. I have put together some thoughts that parents/pupils/teachers can use to help children cope with some of these changes. It is uncharted territory for everyone and so I would really appreciate any feedback that you might have, good, bad or ugly!

Routines

We all know that routines are key for children. It doesn't matter what the routine is, just that it is consistent. However, these are still new habits that need to be formed and we shouldn't expect them to happen overnight. We are asking children to adapt very quickly. One thing I have written/spoken about for years is the need to give children the opportunity to learn the new habits/routines in a new setting, and it might be even harder to have a new routine in a setting with existing routines. We are now asking parents to be the ones to change those routines. School timetables are very different to home, we need to work together to help families find the balance but more importantly give the children time to adapt. This is a huge upheaval and we all need to take our time to adapt

Lessons

We know that our families will be having a range of different approaches to home learning. We cannot control how parents choose to do this. We can help families and teachers who are still providing classroom childcare on how to best support the mental health and emotional state of the children during **this transitional phase**. We should not expect our children to be able to understand what is happening and the scale of the time we are talking about (because nobody does!) As with the routines, we need to take our time with this. Children WILL learn! We can model how to adapt to learning at home without panic. Reading, cooking, cleaning, gardening, helping with younger children, listening to others, being kind. All things that children learn daily and will do without too much intervention. Life is learning, change things slowly and the whole family will find it easier to adapt.

What's new?

Everything! Parents are now teachers, teachers are now childminders, we can't see a lot of family, we can't see friends. We have no clubs to go to, we have no treats to be able to go out and buy if we are 'good'. So much of a child's life is now very different but the beauty of their youth is that they will adapt, in time! That time needs to be given to them. We cannot possibly know the impact of the next few months but if we give the children time to adapt they will. I am 100% sure that for many it will not be a smooth transition, so we all need to have a little patience - far easier said than done in such troubling times. We adults have developing coping mechanisms when things are unfamiliar. We need to help children develop theirs!

Below is a table that has some DO and DON'T suggestions. Happy to adapt/amend following any feedback I receive. I am hoping to create a newsletter style update at regular intervals as the climate changes.

DO	DON'T
Set a simple routine but take your time with the changes.	Expect your child to accept/adapt these changes immediately
Try to teach your child – there are lots of life skills that can now be imbedded in our children.	Try to be a subject teacher! There are plenty of life lessons that parents can teach.
Spend time together as a family	Push for more than usual, you can take your time to give the children the chance to adapt!
Expect tantrums!	Let those tantrums get you down! Take a breath. These are scary times for everyone, even adults a struggling but we have the maturity to deal with them.
Spend time apart! It is important you find, even a small space, for your own thoughts.	Worry if others need to do the same. Personal space is important.
Create a set of ground rules. How you can/can't speak to each other. The need for MUTUAL respect (in appropriate age speak!)	Expect these rules to be followed 100% straight away. It takes us all time to get used to new things.
See the positives – what a fantastic opportunity to instil real family values into our children in a way we didn't have the opportunity to do before.	Focus on what we can't do. There are ways we can help others in new and unusual ways!
Remember every child will probably respond differently to this situation	Expect every child in the same age bracket to respond the same.
Focus on you and your family, your timetables, your way of working needs to suit the people in your house.	Compare how your family are responding to anyone else's. We are all different and have different needs.