

## Dear parents and carers,

In our strange new world, it's the start of the holidays and the end of the spring term, but it may not feel much different after two weeks schooling from home. It's our third week on lockdown, and it seems unlikely that many (or any) restrictions will be lifted within the next couple of weeks, so holiday time is going to be spent staying at home. As a parent or carer, how can you make it feel special and different for your children from the weeks that have just passed (and the weeks to come if schools don't re-open at the end of the month)?

First, do try to create a holiday vibe at home that has a slightly different routine from what you've established over the past fortnight. If you are working from home, you will need "quiet" areas so you can get on, but there should be a lighter feeling elsewhere in the house. You don't need to change much in terms of getting up and bedtimes (in fact, it's good to keep these fairly consistent with term time), but what you're all doing between those times should feel different - less sitting down and studying and more fun activities. Of course, older children should be doing some study over the holidays (there may not be exams this year, but there is still work to be done) but there should be more non-study time for them too.

**Don't feel responsible for keeping your children entertained at all times.** These are very different circumstances from usual, but your children should still learn to keep themselves occupied and not rely on you to provide all the answers. However, if they are looking for inspiration, here's our top six suggestions for things to do away from the television:

**ONE: Make the most of outdoors:** If you have a garden, make sure your children spend some time outdoors to enjoy the good weather that is forecast over the next week or so. If it's a small garden without room to run around, sitting or pottering outside provides a change of environment and is still good for their health. If you don't have a garden, get your children to take a walk or bike ride every day so they can enjoy some fresh air and exercise. If the Government advises against this by imposing greater restrictions in the days ahead, try to find ways to be active indoors – there's lots of online videos to inspire you. Open curtains and windows wide to get as much light and fresh air as you can. In order to get a good night's sleep, the body needs to be physically tired as well as mentally, so it's vital to try and do something physical every day;

**TWO: Set a cooking challenge:** Why not give your teenager the challenge of cooking dinner for the entire family? If they are already an experienced cook, you might want to add to the challenge by choosing the ingredients for them and then getting them to come up with their own recipe based on these ingredients; if they're less experienced, get them to cook along with an online chef or follow a recipe. Dinner too adventurous? How about getting them to prepare lunch for the family or a special treat, such as cakes or brownies.

[Jamie Oliver on You Tube](#)  
[BBC Food](#)

**THREE: Reading for pleasure:** Get your teen to think of a theme and set a challenge for them to read one or more books over the holiday time. This should be exploring an idea that's interesting to them and not directly related to their studies (although it could be connected). Examples include: biographies of celebrities they admire; a historical novel set in a period of history that interests

them; books on self-development; books about places of local interest; books around things they've enjoyed (such as how a film/series was filmed, how to improve at gaming; how to apply make-up). For those that don't like to read, listening to an audio-book or podcast could offer an alternative. There are lots of free deals during lockdown. This sort of activity will stand them in good stead when asked by potential universities or employers how they used their extra time during lockdown.

### [Audible](#)

#### [Many books](#)

#### [All you can books](#)

**FOUR: Go virtual travelling:** Get them to take a round-the-world trip by visiting two or three virtual museums. They could either choose museums in places they'd like to visit, or work around things they enjoy - such as natural history, space, modern art, sculpture or a specific artist. If they're not interested in art, why not enjoy a trip to the theatre? The National Theatre is streaming a different play each week, which you could watch as a family on the TV. This week it's James Cordon in One Man, Two Guvnors.

### [National Theatre](#)

#### [Virtual tours of world class museums](#)

**FIVE: Are they interested in the family?** They could make a family tree, with photos and personal stories of family members they know, going further back in history as they do more research. This duals as helping to create a sense of belonging and certainty during a time when life has changed suddenly.

### [Geneology for beginners](#)

**SIX: Attend a gig** - They might be missing their music, so why not attend an online concert or gig? There's lots of artists that are either doing solo performances from their front rooms, or setting up to do an online gig in place of a live gig that has been cancelled. Your teen is probably already following their favourite artists on social media so will know when live gigs are happening. Summaries are below.

### [Live online gigs](#)

#### [Classical music](#)

We hope that, despite the unusual circumstances, you enjoy the holidays and create some wonderful memories with your families. If you discover some great things to do, let us know so we can share your ideas with others. We'll be back in touch once school resumes at the end of the month with a special feature for those who would have been taking examinations this summer on what they can do during lockdown to help them stand out from others.

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**Stay safe and stay connected,  
Vanessa and Darius**