

Mrs Dowdell's Parenting Pointers

Summer Survival Guide

We're very nearly there! The summer break is nearly upon us, and whether that fills you with joy or with dread, here are some things to consider that may help you and your family to not just survive the six weeks, but enjoy them too ...

Whether parents have the whole six weeks at home with their children, or are still having to work and juggle childcare, the summer holidays always bring a change of pace and routine. It is still really helpful if children know what is expected of them and what they can expect from us. When my children were younger, we used to start the summer break with a trip to a local coffee shop (neutral ground) and there we would come up with a list of what behaviours we wanted to see over the summer, as well as a list of some of the activities they would like to do. It is far easier to get children to "buy in" to a list of rules if they have been involved in helping to create them. I would strongly suggest that making rules about the use of technology should be discussed at this point too.



When we worked on the list of activities the children wanted to do, I made it clear that we were on a budget and that although we could have fun, we couldn't do lots of expensive trips or days out. It's not helpful to promise lots of activities that you know you won't be able to do, so best to be realistic from the



start to avoid disappointments later. If you want some inspiration for things to do, why not come along to the Summer Holiday workshop on Wednesday 17th July (see advert in this newsletter and on Dojo). Once you've got an idea of what activities you want to plan you can think about planning when they will happen. One parent shared with me that in their family they put a summer holiday planner up on the wall that everyone gets to contribute to and this helps children to see a visual representation of each week and what to expect.

It's perfectly OK for children to be bored! Sometimes we think that we need to organise every minute of our children's days in order to keep them entertained. It's really good for children to learn to be resourceful and find their own activities and games to play and they won't learn to do this if we feel we have to fill every waking minute of their lives with stimulating things. One of the joys of the summer is the freedom that comes from emptier schedules and a slower pace. Let's give ourselves and our children the chance to wind down and recharge before the new school year begins. My best advice would be to keep expectations realistic and be kind to each other. Making some plans now, before the summer holidays begin can help us to make the most of the six weeks and prepare ourselves for the next adventure that September will bring.

If you have any questions about this article or need any help or support, please email me at parenting@foundrylaneprimary.co.uk