

Date: 11th February

Dear families

I can hardly believe the first half term is nearly over already. Despite the current lockdown, I have loved my start to life at Grange. The staff, children, governors and families have all made me feel so welcome- thank you. Let's hope school can reopen from 8th March for all our children; I can't wait to meet them all.

Valentines Day

We are asking the children and staff to wear something they LOVE to school on Friday. This might be their favourite jumper, sports clothes, dress...anything they LOVE! We hope the children learning at home wear something they LOVE too!



Half Term

Next week is half term so there will be no home learning. We hope you all manage to have a rest and enjoy some family time together. School opens again for children of critical workers and vulnerable pupils on Monday 22nd February. If your child is absent from school, please remember to ring the school office or email admin@grange.newcastle.sch.uk so that our admin team can update our registers.

Fun in The Snow

I hope you all had fun in the snow this week. We did! Sometimes, maths, English and phonics just have to wait; we don't get such great snow that often. I had the best time throwing snowballs, making snow angels and building snow men with the children and staff!



Home Learning Survey

Thank you so much for taking the time to complete this survey. We had 138 responses which equates to 66% of the families currently doing home learning. The vast majority of the feedback was very positive and has given the staff a real boost. They are all working incredibly hard and it's nice for them to feel appreciated – thank you.

It came across loud and clear that the things you loved the most were:

- videos of the teachers
- Zoom calls with their teacher and friends
- the familiar routine
- regular, high quality feedback from staff

Here are a few comments that reflect what was said by several parents:

“We love that the teachers listen to the comments and often identify when a number of pupils are struggling on a particular area so they explain in a short video. E.g. a maths problem.”

“We have loved getting to know the teachers and their teaching styles better....I now feel I have a better understanding of how subjects are delivered and how I can help as a parent.”

“All the videos have been clear and fun and the enthusiasm and warmth of the teachers has shone through.”

“The speed and accuracy of the feedback has been excellent and the freedom and understanding if work hasn't been done has been a big stress relief. You are doing an excellent job in tough circumstances. Keep it up!”

“Great home learning provision, great feedback to the things we put on Tapestry, keeping us updated and informed on the weekly newsletter, the Zoom calls and we were very impressed at how quickly home learning kicked in when we went into lockdown.”

We were also very interested to read your thoughts about what we could do to improve further. I have summarised some of the issues that were raised by more than one parent and what we have done or will do to address them.

Live lessons – I have explained why we are not providing live lessons in my Week 3 Newsletter dated 23.1.21. This is available for you to read on the homepage of the school website.

Seesaw just says ‘teacher’ and doesn’t tell us which teacher it is giving the feedback – we are in the process of transferring our Seesaw account to a premium which means the teacher’s name is displayed. Hopefully, this will be in place for all staff by the time we come back after the half term break.

Can we have a parent consultation so we know which subjects our child needs to spend more time on? We are planning to have parent consultations next half term (hopefully a couple of weeks after the children have returned to school) over the phone.

Teachers should be vaccinated as a priority – I agree!

Can you loan printers to families? No but we can provide printed sheets for you to collect at the office each week. However, most of the work can be completed on the screen or in your workbook so that you can upload a photo of it to Seesaw or Tapestry.

I’m worried that my child has fallen behind with their learning – Please try not to worry. Keep doing what you can with home learning for a few more weeks. I am hoping that we will all be back to school sometime in March so that we can resume normal teaching again. We will provide extra support to those children that need it; I will provide more detail about this next half term.

I’m worried high quality feedback will suffer from 8th February when all the teachers are back in school teaching their classes – I am monitoring this carefully and really don’t think it will be an issue. All members of staff are working hard to ensure each child learning at home receives one piece of individual feedback each day. If you are concerned though, please drop me an email or give me a ring at school.

Can we have the work uploaded the night before? Some parents have requested this so they can go through it the night before and get resources organised. I have spoken to the staff and we will try to schedule work to be uploaded the night before where possible. Morning messages will be posted in the morning for obvious reasons!

Can we have differentiated work that challenges the more able children? Some lessons already come with an extra challenge or a deep dive (in maths). Extension tasks are also given in individual feedback too- Now try this..... Can you.....? I have also asked staff to consider ways of adding more challenges to activities when it is appropriate to do so.

One family had a great idea that some of our older pupils might like to try. The pupil face times her friend while she is doing her work. This means they are interacting with their friends, sharing ideas and encouraging each other to do the work at the same time.

Thank you for all your hard work either as a critical worker or for supporting your child with their home learning this half term. I hope you enjoy your half term.

Clare Clougher