



Grove Academy
ESPRIT Multi Academy Trust
Turner Street, Northwood, Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 2NL
Telephone: 01782 234550 Email: grove@espritmat.org
Executive Principal & Designated Child Protection Officer: Mrs S Morais
Academy Principal & Deputy Designated Child Protection Officer: Mrs S Carrigan



“Every child deserves to be the best they can be”

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1st April 2021

Dear Parents and carers,

Well here we are already at the end of another term! Obviously this term has been a very different one and incredibly difficult for many children, families and for us here in school. We are so pleased to have all of our children back in school, we missed them so much during the second lockdown!

I am incredibly proud of how hard children worked during the lockdown, staff were very impressed with the work submitted. I am also extremely grateful to all of our parents and carers for the way in which they supported their children’s learning, often in very challenging circumstances such as working from home themselves. Our children held a minute’s silence on the 23rd March to mark the anniversary of the first national lockdown.

I am sure you noticed that we were able to offer much improved remote learning during the latest lockdown, due to us being better prepared. We invested a good deal of time in training our teachers in the technology required, and indeed, how to pre-record a lesson, as it’s quite different to teaching in the classroom. We reviewed each week and made changes where needed to further improve. We were incredibly grateful for all feedback received, which helped us to improve further. We were also thrilled that our support staff were able to be trained to deliver individual reading and phonics lessons via Zoom, these were very well-received!

Once all children returned from 8th March, we have been busy assessing children (mostly informally as we don’t think they should be sitting lots of tests at the moment!). This has enabled us to know exactly which learning has been retained, what needs to be revised, and what else needs to be taught. We have amended our timetables to allow us to focus on the key aspects needed. However, we have also included a much greater emphasis in our timetables on wellbeing and mental health. We have noticed that with this lockdown, more children have found the transition back to school more challenging. They have really missed socialising with their friends, and some are finding it difficult to concentrate as well as they did before. We are noticing more friendship issues and some occasions of online falling out or unkindness. I want to reassure you that we monitor all of this very closely, take appropriate action and amend our lessons as required. We are so pleased that we decided to amend our behaviour policy from September so that it is more based on nurturing principles, and restorative conversations to help pupils to better understand and manage their own behaviour. One of the changes we have made is to introduce a daily ‘wellbeing’ scale where children can show their teachers throughout the day how they are feeling, so that staff can intervene as soon as they notice a change. I have included the wellbeing scale at the end of my letter for you to see, ask your child how they have used it.

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As I have mentioned above, understandably, a number of children have spent more time during lockdown on social media. Whilst sometimes this provides a good way for children to stay in touch, it can, unfortunately, have some risks:

- It can be an easy way for some children to be unkind to others
- It can be easy for children to make contact with people that they actually do not know
- Children can be exposed to material that is not appropriate for their age

Therefore, can we ask that parents and carers do regularly monitor what their children are doing online and talk to them about it. Being the mum of 2 boys, I know that this often isn't positively received by children, as they can view it as an intrusion into their privacy, however it is so much better to be safe than sorry, so a little disagreement will be worth it in the long run. (My biggest stand-off with my son lasted about 3 days without his phone, then he had to give in.....) If you need any advice on e-safety, you can look here for help www.thinkuknow.co.uk and resources and you can contact school staff at any time and we will be happy to help and advise. Hopefully the weather will be improving now and children will be able to spend more time outdoors – lets hope for a repeat of some of the amazing weather from last year!

Since September we have been trying to make school as 'normal' as possible for children, by including as many aspects of school life as we can safely. So assemblies have moved online, and I'm delighted that we have just managed to have our first major fundraising event, with our Chocolate Bingo. This was a huge success, thank you so much for your support with donating prizes and booking places. The children had a great time, and I think everyone managed to go home with something chocolatey – all of the staff were looking on enviously as the children took their prizes home! The event raised over £325 for school funds which is brilliant! We have a few projects in mind at the moment, which we are just costing, such as making the 'secret garden' fit for purpose (bet you didn't know we own a secret bit of land!); investing in some outdoor gym equipment and purchasing a second minibus to support swimming and trips. All of these projects are very costly, but we are firmly committed to working in innovative ways to ensure that the education that we offer is the very best that it can be. We will be trialling swimming lessons after Easter for Year 6, sports clubs and sports competitions.

Talking of getting back to normal, we already have a 'Prom Committee' working to plan for the Year 6 prom. We have sought the views of the Year 6 pupils and really hope that we are able to give them an extra-special send-off this year, so look out for announcements on Dojo of what is happening!

There have been many challenges presented to us by the pandemic, but some of the biggest have been managing staggered timings to the school day, having to keep pupils in their bubbles which has limited playtimes outside, limited space inside due to 1-way systems and social distancing, and having to eat lunches in classrooms. We are constantly reviewing and revisiting these aspects to see where we can make changes, and we listen to feedback from children, parents, carers and staff. We are therefore pleased that we have been able to amend our timetable for after Easter to ensure that all children have 2 outside sessions per day – active time and a lunchtime playtime. Hopefully this will ensure that children feel more ready for their learning.

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Can I thank you all for your support with uniform during this challenging year, our children continue to look so smart. We hope that from September 2021, all children will be wearing our full uniform including blazers and kilts or grey trousers. Please remember to ensure that children wear BLACK TRAINERS to school every day to ensure they are safe and comfortable for their active time. For the summer, girls may also wear a purple checked summer dress. Pupils should continue to come in their PE kit on PE days, which is a Purple T-shirt with academy logo, and any black bottoms (joggers, leggings shorts, etc.) A plain black top may also be worn on the PE day. Please ensure all items of clothing are clearly labelled with your child's name.

Road safety update

We continue to work hard to ensure that our academy is as safe as possible for pupils. You will have noticed recently that we have used our fundraising to purchase some 'little people' to place on pavements to discourage unsafe parking. I have also met with representatives of the Local Authority to request one-way road systems or speed bumps. Unfortunately the pandemic is delaying any action, but they have promised to shortly monitor traffic speeds, to inform their decisions. We are endeavouring to make good the surface of the land on Myatt Street, which has recently been given back to us, however, this is likely to be extremely expensive and we are unlikely to have the budget in the near future. We would use this land as a staff car park to ease congestion on the local roads.

Polling day Thursday 6th May

Following huge efforts to avoid Grove Academy being used, we regret to inform you that Grove Academy will be closed to ALL children on Thursday 06th May for Police and Crime Commissioner Elections.

These elections were postponed from 2020 due to Covid-19 and since the new date was proposed we have been doing all we can to avoid our academy being used as a polling station. The Local Authority Elections Team have been out locally to try and find an alternative venue but we have been advised that no suitable alternative can be sourced. As we are unable to guarantee that visitors will be totally separate from our children, we have no alternative but to close our academy to our children for this day.

We are one of only 9 other schools/academies in the city that is having to be closed for elections and we very much share the frustration you may have for this further interruption to your child's learning. Please feel free to make your complaint here Customer.Feedback@stoke.gov.uk.

Finally, we hope that you have a fantastic Easter with your family. Just a little reminder to you all to ensure that you follow the government road map rules to ensure that when we return to school after the Easter break, we have as many children back as possible. Please remember to Dojo message me if your child develops symptoms by 3:00pm on Saturday 2nd April and/or if your child tests positive on or before Wednesday 7th April. This is to enable me to be able to trace and notify close contacts.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs S Carrigan
Academy Principal

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Well-being Scale



5 I need some help	I feel... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sad Upset Frightened Frustrated Agitated 	My teacher will.... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk to me to find out what is upsetting me and work through strategies to help me Keep me active with the daily mile Walk and talk to me Encourage me to keep a journal 	I am going to try.... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To remain calm until I have spoken to my teacher Ask to take a break Take some deep breaths To stay safe in my classroom Use my time out card
4 I am feeling upset	I feel... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worried Unhappy Would like to talk Not at ease Anxious 	My teacher will... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check how I'm feeling and help me to feel better Implement daily circle time Use mindfulness techniques to help me 	I am going to try... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To think about what is upsetting me and share with an adult Use my timeout card To use mindfulness techniques
3 I've got a small problem	I feel.... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Calm Little emotion Nervous 	My teacher will.... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check how I am feeling Help me to build resilience Help me to recognise my emotions and what they mean 	I am going to try... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To express my feeling using the well-being scale Let a teacher know if I have a problem and need help To be resilient
2 Things are pretty good	I feel.... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good Happy Focused 	My teacher will... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High five in the sky Encourage me to keep active, eat and sleep well 	I am going to try.... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep trying my best and be a magic learner To stay active, eat and sleep well to feel great
1 I am feeling great	I feel... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confident Brave Motivated 	My teacher will.... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thumbs up from my teacher High five in the sky 	I am going to try.... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep going above and beyond Enjoy the feeling and have fun To help others to overcome their worries

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