

29 January 2021

Dear Parent or Carer

As I write, the Prime Minister has just confirmed that no pupils will be back in school before the 8th of March. This is disappointing news for all of us, I know, but I would like to pay tribute to the positive attitude of so many of our students and to the dedication and adaptability of our teachers in delivering live online lessons.

Remote Learning Update

We would be very grateful if you would complete the survey on remote learning below, so that we can understand more about how we might further improve our offering here and about what has gone well so far. We will survey the students separately to gauge their thoughts, probably next week.

Link to remote learning survey for parents to complete: <https://forms.gle/nmKAA4MNNJtQUEbH7>

One point we do need to raise is that some pupils, particularly in older year groups, are not always leaving their cameras on after the register has been taken at the start of each lesson: the concern from teachers is that in some cases these pupils are not always on task with the content of the lessons. If you could make sure that your son or daughter gets up at the usual time and treats every day like a normal school day as much as possible, it would be a great help.

The other concern we have is that some pupils are surreptitiously using their mobile phones during lessons to message one another, which is a major distraction from the task at hand. If you can make a rule at home that mobiles are stored away in a safe space during school hours this will really help your child to concentrate better during the school day.

Student Mental Health

Seeing the friendly faces of fellow students and teachers on screen every day is a real boost to mental health in these difficult and isolated times.

Next week is Mental Health week, a timely reminder of how we can support our young people who are coping with the challenges of the pandemic, changes to their education, social lives and personal development. It is hard enough being a teenager but the current situation will be adding to the stress that our young people are under.

Our students are not alone, you are there to help and as a school, The Grange has several tools to support you further:

- **What can you do at home?**
 - **Find time to talk, just the two of you** – ‘Check in’ with them while you’re doing things together, so they get used to talking about their feelings.
 - **Play together** – Play helps them to be curious, learn new things, solve problems and express feelings without words.
 - **Be a role-model** – Show how you cope with difficult feelings and look after yourself.

Do you need further help? If so please contact the school through your child's form tutor, Head of Year or Mr Nagle, the safeguarding lead - j.nagle@thegrange.futureacademies.org. We can offer specialist counsellors, 1:1 sessions face to face or virtually, and an alternative to the day to day challenges of being at home.

If you need more specialised help please contact:

- SHOUT - Text **CONNECT** to **85258**
- Childline - 0800 1111
- Samaritans - 116123

The Grange will offer students more advice regarding their mental health during tutor time next week.

New Governors

Many thanks to all of you who voted in our Parent Governor election.

Our new Parent Governor, Beth Innes, whose son joined The Grange in September 2020, is a lifelong resident of the area, President of the Oxhey WI and a strong supporter of the local community in addition to her day job as a Renewals Manager for a national IT company.

Beth will be joined by our new Future Academies Governor Emma Weintroub, who has worked in the property industry for over 30 years. She now uses her skills and expertise working at LocatED, who are responsible for buying and developing sites in England to help deliver schools that will provide education for future generations.

We are delighted to have two such experienced individuals joining our Local Governing Body: their personal and professional experiences, combined with their wealth of local knowledge will be a tremendous support to the academy.

Poor Weather / Emergency Closure Procedures

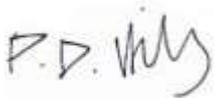
The recent snow did not cause us any problems, but do please sign up to the local authority notification system if you haven't done so already. If the academy were to close in an emergency, aside from our own communication systems, Herts CC would also let you know too:

Hertfordshire's Closure Notification System link: <https://member.everbridge.net/892807736725489/login>

Please ensure that you and your child have a safe travel plan in place. Emergency or early closures are very rare, but it is wise to be prepared.

In closing, we are looking forward to the Year 7 parents evening taking place on Thursday 4th February 2021. So far these virtual events have been really well attended and the level of engagement from Year 7 in their remote learning has been very pleasing indeed.

I wish you and your family a restful and safe weekend.



Dr Philip Hills
Principal
The Grange Academy