

Volume 16 |
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January
2021

Newsletter

*“Our family
school where
all are equally
valued”*

Big thank you to all!

I would like to start by saying a big thank you to all families for such a wonderful commitment and dedication to online learning. We know that it is not easy to learn online and can never replace the face to face classroom experience. Nevertheless we have 97% of children online and handing in their learning. We would love to achieve 100% so if any families are having trouble logging on please do get in touch with us and we will endeavour to help.

You may hear on the news that the government is trying to send out more laptops to schools to support online learning. However, the priority is still to help secondary school learners first and thus we have not received any laptops. We have lent out all the laptops that we have available in school to families but do understand that one laptop per family is still a struggle where you have more than one child. Teachers are aware of this and are sympathetic to the children's needs and ability to gain access to the learning set. Try taking turns on the devices that you have at home and do not worry if your child submits learning later in the day as a result. All learning will be read and offered feedback once submitted to the classteacher.

I am also delighted to share with you an article written by our parent governor - Farah Mulla. Farah has penned a super account of her experience of working at home whilst supporting her children's online learning. She offers some great tips and advice to keep all of us parents sane, happy and in good health and reminds us all that we are all in a similar position and that we can only do the best we can in these challenging times. You will find the article later in this newsletter.

Unfortunately we are unable to share any photographs of the



exciting things that children have been learning in school as we would usually do.

However we would love to hear from the children at home. Please send in any pieces of learning, activities projects or photographs that you would like to share with us and we will include them in our future newsletters and on our twitter account. Send what you would like to share with us to office@groveroad.hounslow.sch.uk

As we start the month of February, we are so near to the half-term break and it will be a well-earned break and rest for the whole school community! School will be closed to all pupils. We will let you know as soon as we hear whether school will reopen for all pupils after the half term break, or if it will continue to be only open to some pupils. Hounslow still remains one of the London boroughs with a very high rate of transmission and infection. Please continue to follow the safety laws and guidance in order to keep everyone safe, especially during the half-term break. We continue to look forward to a time when we can welcome everyone back into school.

Lyn Gray
Headteacher

Class emails

The class emails are there for you to contact the class teacher for support with learning. If you are having technical difficulties or connection issues please ring the school office or email Mrs Beckford (gbeckford@groveroad.hounslow.sch.uk) who will try to help you.

Red – red@groveroad.hounslow.sch.uk

Orange – orange@groveroad.hounslow.sch.uk

Yellow Class – yellow@groveroad.hounslow.sch.uk

Green Class – green@groveroad.hounslow.sch.uk

Blue Class – blue@groveroad.hounslow.sch.uk

Indigo Class – indigo@groveroad.hounslow.sch.uk

Violet Class – violet@groveroad.hounslow.sch.uk

Gold Class – gold@groveroad.hounslow.sch.uk

Nursery Applications- Admission September 2021

Nursery Applications will open on **1 January 2021** and close on **7 May 2021**

This year due to Covid-19 we are not encouraging parents/carers to attend the school to collect the application form. Electronic copies of the application forms, flyers and brochures have been sent out to telephone requests.

The Council website will be updated by 1 January 2021 to show this information.

Parents/carers can return the application via email directly to the school with the scanned documents or, if they rather, print the form and return by post. Obviously, it does not stop parents/carers that are already attending the school to collect hard copy forms of which you can print from the templates provided.

Please share with staff and parents/carers

The LA have been running a short COVID-19 survey over the past fortnight to find out how the pandemic has impacted you and your family. Hundreds of residents have already taken part, but we would like to hear from you, too.

It will only take a couple of minutes for you to complete the survey. Your feedback will help us to improve the support we are providing to Hounslow residents. Thank you.

<https://haveyoursay.hounslow.gov.uk/communications/covid-survey/>

Holly Haldane | Senior Communications Manager

Working from home - A parent's perspective.

How to tackle the challenges of working from home through the Covid-19 pandemic: A parent's perspective

By Farah Mulla

It has undoubtedly been a few challenging months for everyone, with different pinch points and difficulties. However, I am going to set out my experience and share my learnings as a parent of two young boys, now aged 5 and 8, working through the pandemic.

It has been a bumpy ride for us, and just when we thought we were through the worst, we have once again returned to the thick of it, with some hard weeks and possibly months ahead.

Looking back to lockdown 1.0, I still remember leaving the office and saying goodbye to my colleagues, fully expecting to return in 2 or 3 weeks. How wrong was I? As I headed home, I gave little thought to home-schooling and juggling, fully expecting to take it in my stride.



Wake of the pandemic

The challenges of working from home with kids, can of course vary depending on factors like how many kids you have at home, ages and any special accommodations or needs they may have. For instance, a teenager, in secondary education, is likely to need less time and attention than an infant, toddler or primary schooler. However, I know from colleagues and family that teenagers provide their own challenges (none of which I've had the pleasure of experiencing yet).

As lockdown kicked off, I was plunged into a sense of panic on what to teach and how! Luckily, the school stepped up and took that in hand. But then came the really hard part of actually doing the day job, whilst home-schooling one child, who was attending school, and another that was in nursery at the time. In the first couple of weeks, we muddled through, but with the perpetual guilt I felt as a mother, who was unable to give both work and home 100% attention.

I realised quickly things needed to change. I had to let go of the guilt and accept that us parents can only do our best, but not only that, I needed to ensure I maintained a good work life balance. I also had a duty of care to myself, so that I could then take care of my family's needs.

So, what did I learn and change in lockdown 1.0 that may help, now we've entered the latest UK lockdown:

1. Be honest!

Employers are willing to help, they (generally speaking) don't want you to fail and they certainly don't want you to burn out. Speak about how you're feeling and where the struggles lie. You should be able to find a solution that works for both parties.

Also, be honest with your child's school, they again are willing to help. If the work is a challenge, tell them! Or if it's incomplete, for whatever reason, communicate with them. The staff email and wellbeing calls are there for that purpose and no concern or problem is too much – the school want everyone, children and parents, to be comfortable with what they are asking. Don't do what I heard one parent in another school recently doing, and that is complete their child's work for them. That isn't achieving anything, and you WILL get caught out.

2. Down tools

Take some time off. Today, a supplier of ours mentioned that he'd taken a series of half-day holidays as it had all become a bit much. Take a break! Go for that walk because a change of scenery will help everyone.

3. Don't sweat the small stuff

If your child has only managed to complete a bit of their work, take that as a win. Focus on the subjects that matter. Similarly, we all have a number of time-consuming, non-essential tasks. See if you can simplify your workload. Forget about the piles of laundry. If your kids do indulge in more screen time than preferred, that's fine too.

If you find getting changed out of PJs all too much, that's also OK. A Mum I know recently confessed to throwing a smart top on over her pyjamas, to join an early morning call. Did being dressed semi-professionally impact on her performance during the call? Of course not! Did anyone notice? No! Did it help her get the job done? Yes!

Also, I know parents worry about family meals, wanting to make sure they are nutritious and tasty. That can be hard to achieve when you are time poor. Some things my friends and families have found helpful are:

- [Slow cooker meals](#)
- [One pot dishes](#)
- Recipe boxes for example Gousto, SimplyCook and HelloFresh

Even if that's too hard to manage, there is nothing wrong with a takeaway or a fish-finger sandwich.

4. Time management

Maintain a regular schedule (as much as you can), so that you and your child have clear expectations on what is required each day. Starting with breakfast, right through to bedtime and everything in between.

I know of one family, where the young children (KS1) came down to home school in their school jumpers daily. It helped them differentiate between school and home time and thereby, focus better.

That said, if it just isn't feasible to maintain your schedule some days, then so be it (see point 3).

5. Interruptions

The constant interruptions can be hard to handle and I'm not sure I know how to tackle them completely either.

A friend of mine recently shared her embarrassment with me. Due to present to 100+ colleagues, mic unmuted ready to go, her child walked in bellowing repeatedly "Mummy what's for lunch?". Of course, it was at that point technology failed her and she couldn't mute her mic.

My own 5-year-old hopped onto my lap in EVERY meeting during lockdown 1.0, announcing to everyone "Hi – I'm being good", before wandering off again.

These are both rather tame interruptions, but we felt they undid the professional image we'd so carefully constructed of ourselves (of course it didn't, but it was embarrassing). However, if you are in need of making your most recent embarrassment inducing interruption less significant, a simple Google search will reveal many a funny anecdote, to help you feel better.

The question remains, how do you deal with the interruptions?

You could warn those you're on a call with. Don't apologise for being a parent and having to adapt to the role of teacher, whilst working. This is something you needn't feel sorry about. It is not your fault, but let them know you may be interrupted, so it's expected and you're less embarrassed.

If you can, create a designated workspace, allowing your child to see you are 'at work', it may just deter them from interrupting. Set rules on how to get your attention. If your child is too young to be left to their own devices, consider zoning a room, so you can be in the same room as your child and keep a watchful eye.

For young children, create busy bags (or as I had, a busy drawer, so my 5-year-old could pull out a different game or toy to play with, stickers were surprisingly popular), these should buy you some time to get key work completed or to attend a meeting uninterrupted. Just select toys that are single player!

And if all else fails, a noise cancelling headset is an essential piece of kit and a wireless one is even better for those urgent demands!



6. Work flexibly

Recognise there are a finite number of hours in the day and that not everything is urgent. Being able to work flexibly has been a godsend for me, but it has also been necessary for me to call out what isn't urgent and try and intersperse back-to-back calls with home schooling and life. I've taken to blocking out parts of my diary, giving me time for other things that need to happen.

When necessary, I've taken an hour out during the day and logged back in, once the kids are in bed to mop up anything I've been unable to do. However, be careful with this approach. Rest is important, as is a break from work. But for my own sanity, this has worked better.

Only you know what will work best for you, but discuss it openly and frankly with your employer anyway (see note 1).

7. Take breaks

It's tempting to plough through the work, without a break, hoping you'll finish sooner and be free. But work rarely ends and those to-do lists seem to magically grow. So, factor in breaks with the family, give your child an opportunity to connect with you and enjoy one another's company. You'll feel better for it.

Some things that worked for me in the first lockdown were: picnic lunches in the garden, (sadly the weather prevents this now, so we have shifted to our living room), taking a 1-hour daily walk with the kids and doing a collective #PEWithJoe session.

8. Set boundaries

Setting both physical and verbal boundaries has also helped me get in the zone, and helped my children understand when I am working. I've been putting on my 'work clothes' to indicate I'm working, rather than PJs, as tempting as it has been (and yes, I'll be honest there are days where I've done just that, and kept the camera off, remember point 3 – Don't sweat the small stuff).

I also say "I'm going to work", to help my children understand when I am actually working and not just sitting leisurely at my computer. This has been particularly helpful with my 5-year-old.

9. Prioritise and schedule

With kids around, you're not going to have as much time to dedicate to work so it's important you use the time wisely. Make a list of key tasks that you need to get through each day and try thinking about which less important tasks can be done during quieter periods.

10. A problem shared is a problem halved

There are times, especially in the early days, when I struggled, I have found speaking to others in the same boat has helped me. Of course, the situation we've found ourselves in can't be changed, but it has made me feel better. It's been cathartic.

I've also found online-learning communities and joining social discussions helpful. Not just to share worries, but also as a great way to collaborate and support other parents. From #PEWithJoe to Twinkl, it's been wonderful to see how people, companies and parents have come together.

11. Teamwork

If you have a partner or family member living with you, who is also working from home, try and agree and plan between you, when each of you will dedicate time to your child throughout the day. This will enable you to get work done, whilst your child is getting some much-needed attention from

a family member or vice-versa. Also make them aware of key meetings and urgent deadlines, so you can switch out parenting roles.

12. Me time

During this difficult period, you're going to be multi-tasking on a completely new level, and you'll need a break yourself! I've found taking time out to just enjoy a cuppa or a quiet 5-minute break is rejuvenating. I also lock myself away, to do a quick work out (but eating chocolate may work better for you), it helps me release some tension.

13. Multi-platform tools

Being able to work on multi-platform tools (like Google Docs or Dropbox) and also being able to access emails on my mobile has been very useful for me, when juggling. It's also helpful to those parents who find themselves suddenly trapped underneath a sleeping baby.

14. Give undivided attention

If your child is trying to get your attention, there's a pretty good chance they aren't going to stop until they get it. Try and find the time to put down the work and give your child the attention they need and deserve. Then, they are more likely to get on with some independent play.

Although it's not been an easy ride, I feel better equipped to deal with the current lockdown, with these measures in place. My husband and I have been very fortunate to have bosses that have shown understanding. Speaking to other parents, we know we've coped ok for having set these measures in place and having empathetic employers.

To employers and line managers of anyone in a similar boat to me, I wanted to provide a few further tips to help your parent/carer workforce. Please be mindful of everybody's commitments, appreciate their individual circumstance and acknowledge it. It goes a long way to boost morale. Empathise with each employee's context, by creating deeper insights into their specific situation. Leadership signalling that unorthodox hours are ok, can make a massive difference to employees like me. Indeed, hearing "do whatever you need to do" instantly relieved me of a lot of stress.

Be mindful of commitments to family life. The school closures and lack of childcare offered through families, or formal childcare arrangements can mean that parents feel left out of social team meets, if scheduled at an inopportune time. Don't make the assumption that everyone is free to have a virtual drink or chat after work. This can pressure your employee into joining when really, all they want to do is fall into an exhausted slump somewhere. I am lucky that my workplace has created virtual coffee catchups in the morning and organised charity events at the start of the workday (such as our much looked forward to baking sessions).

Finally, remember 'it is ok to not be ok' - and who really is, at the moment? It sounds cliché, but we are all in it together. We may not be productive every working day during the pandemic - but that's ok. We are all trying our best and showing up with kindness and compassion is more than enough.

I don't have all the answers, but I am lucky enough to have employers that have empowered me to weave work into my daily life. When recently asked what my short and mid-term goals were, within an employee survey, I could only state 'Survive!'.

On that note, as parents and carers of children, it is important to take care of your own mental health. If you need help and advice on dealing with mental health problems in everyday life, during

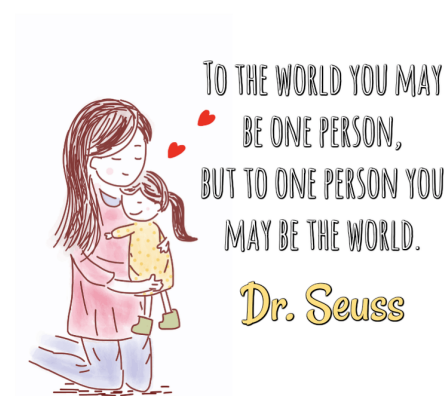
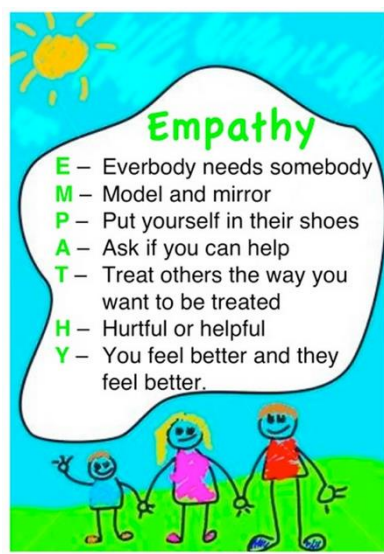
the pandemic, please reach out to the NSPCC, where their helpline counsellors are available to talk, whatever the worry. You can call them on 0808 800 5000 or email help@nspcc.org.uk . More info here: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) advice and support for parents and carers | NSPCC](#)



School Value this half-term – Empathy



- *This is when we understand that there are consequences to the choices that we make.*
- *We respect each other's feelings and situations or circumstances.*
- *We care about each other and show kindness to each other.*
- *We can reflect on our actions and behaviour choices and always want to do better.*
- *We want to help each other and ourselves to be better citizens.*
- *We always show good manners and politeness.*



Achievement

Huge well done to Zayn in Blue Class who has reached an amazing 100 positive points!



The following children received recognition from their teachers:

Gold Class - Sumaya received a curiosity certificate for always responding to feedback.

Violet Class - Harshitha and Ruhi have been awarded initiative certificates for producing excellent work online and attempting all the extra challenges and extensions.

Indigo Class - Sahib is receiving an empathy award for helping other children out on the class Google Meet calls.

Blue Class - A Self-Confidence certificate goes to Isaac who is demonstrating confidence in the Google Meet calls and in his maths.

Green Class - Harry has won an empathy award for sharing his IT skills with his friends and helping them to work online.

Yellow Class - Jenna Reese and Artiom both receive a Self-confidence award for working hard on their phonics online.

Orange Class - A resilience award goes to Safwaan who has been really trying hard to remember all his commands and to respond to them.

Red Class - An empathy award goes to Kristina for always being first to help her friends in class.

A big well done to all of the children Your certificates will be coming to you in the post very soon.

Don't forget to have a go at answering the January Science riddles -

January Science Riddles are:

Super Scientists (KS1 only)

What is blue when it is rich, red when it is poor, warm when it is in a bear and cold when it is in a frog?

Marvellous Mavens

What is full of gas but is not a car, has many rings but is not found in a jewellery store and has a body but is found in space?

Prolific Professors

What is as big as a mountain but is part of a belt?

Enter via your Google Classrooms account. Remember, only one guess each. Good Luck, competition ends on Friday February 5th.

Useful learning websites

BBC have just launched some great websites and programs to help children learn

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zvryp4j>

Oxford Owl has help with Phonics, Maths and Reading

<https://home.oxfordowl.co.uk/>

STEM have some exciting resources that can aid your child's maths development, science or languages

<https://www.stem.org.uk/home-learning>

Don't forget the key resources that Grove Road School use to support learning like Jane Considine's live writing support lessons:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/thetrainingspace>

and of course, our fantastic maths approach at Maths No Problem:

<https://mathsnoproblem.com/en/resources/school-at-home/>

You can find some useful Reading and Phonics links on our school website on the English page at:

<https://www.groveroadprimary.co.uk/school-life/curriculum/english/>

We also have some other useful Home – Learning links on the school website at:

<https://www.groveroadprimary.co.uk/home-learning-links/>

Free School Meal Vouchers - February Half Term

Schools will close as usual over February half-term and will not be expected to remain open to vulnerable children and the children of critical workers during that week.

Schools do not need to provide lunch parcels or pay for vouchers during the February half-term as the Covid Winter Grant is in place to support families and children outside of term-time. The Covid Grant has been distributed to Local Authorities and the Local Authority will fund the half term vouchers through this Grant.

Parents will receive their FSM vouchers through Wonde as normal and should check their emails for receipt of these vouchers.

Thank you for your support in this matter.

Holiday Provision - February Half Term

Please find attached a list of Ofsted registered holiday playschemes that are available during the February half term.

These are being made available to children whose parents are key workers during the half term holiday period.

Please make direct contact with the scheme organiser.

Feltham & Hanworth

Crane Park Holiday Scheme

Crane Park Primary School
Norman Avenue, HANWORTH TW13 5LN
07857 893 720

Southville Holiday Playscheme

Southville Junior School (Annex)

Bedfont Lane, FELTHAM TW14 9NP
020 8890 9873

Energy Kidz Out Of School Club

Reach Academy, 53-55 High St, FELTHAM
TW13 4AB

Call the office on 0333 577 1533 for bookings or general queries.

Energy Kidz (energy-kidz.co.uk)

St Albans Day Nursery

St Albans House, Elmwood Avenue, Elmwood Ave, FELTHAM TW13 7AA

020 8707 1683

stalbandsdaynursery.com

Isleworth

Hounslow Holiday Playscheme

Isleworth Town Primary School
Twickenham Road, ISLEWORTH TW7 6AB
07986 808 714

hounslowholidayplayscheme@virginmedia.com

Isleworth Explorers Holiday Playscheme

Twickenham Road, ISLEWORTH TW7 7EU
020 8560 4552

isleworthexplorers@hotmail.co.uk

Marlborough Minders Holiday Camp

Marlborough Primary School
London Road, ISLEWORTH TW7 5XA
020 8289 4679 / 020 8560 3978

Super Camps at the Green School

The Green School for Girls
London Road, ISLEWORTH TW7 5BB
01235 467300

info@supercamps.co.uk

www.supercamps.co.uk

The Learning Tree Childcare Ltd

22A Wood Lane, ISLEWORTH TW7 5ED
020 8560 7926

hello@learningtreechildcare.co.uk
www.learningtreechildcare.co.uk/

Brentford & Chiswick

Belmont Aktiva Camps

The William Hogarth School
Duke Road, CHISWICK W4 2JR
020 3551 8909
ben@aktivacamps.com
www.aktivacamps.com

Belmont Holiday Smiles

Belmont Primary School
Belmont Road, CHISWICK W4 5UL
07562 906628

Green Dragon Holiday Care Scheme

Green Dragon Primary School
North Road, BRENTFORD TW8 0BJ
07788 851 514

Playdays Holiday Playscheme

15 – 19 Chiswick High Rd, CHISWICK W4 2ND
020 8747 9599

The Cygnet Holiday Club

Strand on the Green Schools
Thames Road, CHISWICK W4 3NX
07852 491 432



February Half Term Multi Sports Camp at Hounslow Town Primary School

WHERE: HOUNSLOW TOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL, SCHOOL ROAD, HOUNSLOW TW3 1QZ

WHEN: 15th February to 19th February (Monday to Friday)

TIME: 9.00am – 3.00pm

COST: **EARLY BIRD OFFER – 5 DAYS £60 OR SINGLE DAY £14 – OFFER ENDS ON 5th FEBRUARY**
AFTER 5th FEBRUARY – 5 DAYS £65 OR SINGLE DAY £15

Skillz4Life Sports Coaching is running multi sports camp comprising of highly professional coaching sessions for **CHILDREN OF KEY WORKERS ONLY** during the **FEBRUARY HALF TERM** in our **COVID19- SECURE SCHOOL ENVIROMENT FOLLOWING ALL THE GOVERNMENT SAFETY MEASURES AND MOST RECENT GUIDELINES** in which boys and girls of all abilities from **4yrs – 11yrs old (Reception to Year 6)** are welcome.

We have a great team of experienced, fully qualified and DBS checked coaches who can provide fun, knowledgeable sessions aimed at teaching the basic skills.

Children will have an opportunity to practice games and techniques, as well as participate in matches and fun activities every day.

All children who attend the final day of the camp receive a personal achievement certificate, daily certificates are awarded for most improved and player of the day.

All you will need to do is provide a packed lunch each day for your child. Don't miss out on this great opportunity!

IF YOU ARE KEY WORKER AND WOULD LIKE TO SECURE A PLACE FOR YOUR CHILD AT THE MULTI SPORTS CAMP, PLEASE CALL US OR TEXT US ON 07402550606.

PLACES ARE VERY LIMITED TO ADHERE STAFF-PUPIL RATIO AS PER COVID-19 GOVERNMENT GUIDELINES SO PLEASE BOOK IN ADVANCE TO AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT.

NO BOOKINGS WILL BE ACCEPTED ON THE DAY.

YOU CAN NOW ALSO FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK AND INSTAGRAM



Coming up in February

- 1st February LGBT and History Month begins
- 4th – World Cancer day
- 5th - New deadline for Science Riddle Competition
- 7th – Charles Dickens Birthday
- 9th - Safer Internet Day
- 12th – Darwin Day
- 12th – Chinese New Year - Year of the Rat
- 14th - Valentines Day
- 15th – 19th - Half Term
- 16th – Shrove Tuesday - Pancake Day!
- 17th – Ash Wednesday
- 25th - Purim