

Learning together to be the best we can be

Headteacher - Nichola Irving



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Dear Parents and Carers

I am writing to acknowledge that we recognise and absolutely understand the challenges that this lockdown and current closure of schools is causing us all. In particular we feel that week 3 and 4 of this lockdown has been tough for many of you home schooling. Times are tough at the moment and the dark, cold and rainy / snowy days aren't helping either so we need to support each other and get through this together.

You are probably wondering where I am going with this Well my main reason for writing is to say WELL DONE! You are surviving a pandemic! Whatever your personal circumstances, you are doing the best you can. We know that we have high expectations at Horton Grange and we are setting a lot of work each day, in line with Government guidelines. We will keep doing this as we want to minimise any lost learning. However, all we ask is that you do your best. If you are able to support and ensure your child completes all the learning set that's great, but if you can't on some days, that's ok too. Please do not let remote learning affect your or your child's well-being; the most important thing is that your child feels safe, loved and cared for. Everyone's circumstances are different and we appreciate that.

We are getting a growing number of parents contacting us asking for their child to attend to school for various different reasons including parents struggling to complete remote learning and parents feeling the pressures of trying to work from home at the same time. Whilst we empathise with this, schools have been closed, except to those who meet set criteria, to help us play our part in fighting this pandemic whilst there are still pressures on the NHS. I think you all know, we would like nothing more than to open fully, educating the children of Horton Grange and doing the job we all love but for now we can't.

Currently, we have 159 pupils accessing school. As a comparative during the last lockdown in March around 20 children attended and therefore we are at full capacity in most year groups, whilst adhering to our current risk assessments. We want to be a supportive part of the community and have tried not to turn any pupils away whose parents have shown us proof of key worker status in line with the Government's criteria or who are vulnerable as defined by Government criteria.

However, the guidance states if you are able to keep your child at home you should do so. I fully appreciate that being in school is the best place for children's learning to flourish. However, the priority at this moment in time is to reduce Covid 19 transmission in the community hence the Government's clear message to stay at home. You may wish to consider whether you absolutely need a place for your son/daughter in school; this is a decision that only you can make as everyone's circumstances are different and no judgements should be made on this. Whilst the Government has set no limits on numbers attending providing the criteria is met, I must ensure risks are minimised and there are set risk assessments in school to help keep everyone safe. There may become a point where school has to set a tighter criteria for key workers eg two parents who are front line critical workers being allocated priority places.



Meanwhile, we will continue with our current systems for setting home learning, which we are evaluating on an on-going basis; please be mindful this is a new way of working for us too. Teachers are teaching face to face lessons daily for the children attending as well as setting remote learning, providing feedback and keeping in contact with families.

I am aware there is a lot in the press regarding how long this current situation will go on for. We know as much as you do, but are told we will get two weeks' notice of any changes. Please be assured we will keep you informed as soon as we know more.

Take care and stay safe.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "N. Irving". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the left of the typed name.

Nichola Irving
Headteacher