



Dear Parents,

Our usual newsletter is not possible this week, so I am just sending a parent update letter instead.

Well done to families juggling complex home arrangements but managing to keep some learning done; we know it has not been easy. Thank you so much to those of you who have taken the time to get in touch to offer some feedback.

Here are some answers to our top parent queries this week.

Does my child have to complete all the online learning?

No. Increasingly teachers are making it clear which are the "must do" learning activities to help your child continue to make learning progress, from the "can do" activities. We know all children work at a different pace. All families are in different situations. The teachers will continue to post work but ultimately you need to decide what your child, or you, can cope with at the moment. For some families, juggling different ages, or with children who need more direct support, the number of activities each day will be smaller. Other children, as in regular class, will race through everything and may need some encouragement to slow down so that they do their best rather than race to finish. Do what feels right for your situation now. It's okay!

How do I prioritise what's important?

Your child should be attempting some daily maths, some daily language work, some Unit of Inquiry and any specialist posts. If you can't keep up, try to select what seems the most important for your child. If we can see no work is being posted from your child, we may get in touch to see if everything is okay. If you or your child is unwell and cannot post, please just alert the homeroom teacher so we are aware.

How do I get a balance so children aren't online all day?

We obviously have to set work online as it's the best way to get work to your child and give feedback. But a lot of the work can be done off line and just loaded back to Seesaw later. Make sure you build in snack time, lunch and play as we would have in a normal day. Balance out physical keep fit activities, with reading and with art activities or instrumental practice. Across a regular week, children will have a balance of activities and this will be replicated as much as possible. Encourage 5-minute workout activities to stretch, run on the spot, do star jumps, etc and create brain breaks. We should be doing this as adults too!

Can I help my child?

As with any learning task at home or at school, some children will need encouragement to get started but don't be tempted to do it all for them - the teachers need to see what your child is doing independently and you don't want your child to be totally adult-dependent. That would make it much harder when regular school starts again. If it is really too hard, start a different task they can succeed in and try again later, or flag it to the teacher.



We're still working and need the activities the evening before to be able to plan a schedule for the day ahead

From Sunday 29 March, we will ask our staff to post by 18.00 each evening for the next day's work schedule. This should allow working parents time to plan for the next day. But a please - if the work is posted in the evening, please respect our staff's own family time and don't bombard our teachers with emails in the evenings. Some have been working 12+ hour days to set all this up and plan behind the scenes.

A teacher isn't posting or answering

Our staff get ill too or may be juggling their own family situations, so please be patient. In most cases we will share between grade teachers so we can cover short gaps, but this may not be possible if it a specialist - some of our specialists are teaching all 218 children online!

Why aren't all Seesaw posts "marked"?

In regular class, teachers will oversee all activities your child may do but only "close mark" some of them to assess where your child is in their learning or to help move them on. Our teachers are now receiving hundreds of posts every day, so will choose where it is most important to give specific feedback. They can still see all the work and are using this to plan next steps in learning for the whole class and for your child.

Why aren't Lower Primary using Google Meet?

Google Meet has now been adapted for larger group meets and we have been trialling it successfully with staff meets, G3 - 5 meets and will gradually roll it out lower down the school too. But it has also taken longer to get all our younger students online and used to working at home and our staff have had a lot to juggle for this age group. It will come; please be patient.

My child has left something at school - can I collect it?

Sadly not. To protect all our staff, the campus is now closed completely until further notice.

What is the school doing about all the bus drivers, chaperones, cleaners, hot lunch staff, etc?

Behind the scenes, our hard-working Director of Finance and Operations, Kevin Green, has been liaising with all our contractors to find ways to protect jobs and incomes for our regular contract and service staff, so that when the school can open, we will have a team ready and able to continue running the school as usual.

Community Action

We are currently unable to pursue some of the community actions we had planned, such as working with Heath Hands. But we thought it would be nice as a school to show some solidarity and care for the elderly residents of Henderson Court, the old-aged people's residential home we work with each year. We can usually go on a regular basis to play a short concert and for the choir to sing some songs. Their residents are unable to get out now and are in isolation. We thought it would be nice as a school community if children could make a card or draw a really nice picture or painting to help cheer up the elderly residents. Miss Jacinda will be

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sending a message out via Seesaw later in the week. Parents could then post the pictures from the school to Henderson Court as a community gesture.

Cognita Advice for Families

There is some general advice for families on coping with the situation on the Cognita homepage <https://www.cognita.com/>

Please be kind to our teachers, who are working very hard to provide the best possible online learning and to support your family through this challenging period. Some are receiving hundreds of long emails and it is not possible for them to provide an individualised programme for each family. They really are trying their best.

As ever, please don't hesitate to get in touch. We know that we will need to make adjustments as everyone gets used to the new situation.

With very best wishes,

Shirley Harwood
Principal

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