



ESPRIT Multi Academy Trust  
Keelings Road, Northwood, Stoke on Trent, ST1 6QA  
Telephone: 01782 236745 Fax: 01782 234639  
Executive Principal: Mrs S Moran

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



Our ref. SM.GA  
31<sup>st</sup> March, 2021

Dear Parents and carers

Thank you for your support during this second partial school closure. I apologise in advance for writing such a long letter.

I met with Trustees earlier this week and want to share information about the planned changes to the hours of the school day at our 3 academies.

You will be aware that during the pandemic we needed to amend our hours considerably to ensure the safety of our children, community and staff. This has created many challenges for some families and us, as academies. It has also created positives, in the way we have worked together to overcome these challenges and develop solutions; for example, the collection and dismissal arrangements at Grove and Hamilton feel much safer and calmer for our children. We are incredibly grateful for your overwhelming support during these challenging times.

We have received a lot of feedback from parents and carers throughout the autumn and spring term about the amended school day, the different start and finish times between the infant and junior academies as well as nursery times. We have taken all this feedback into account as we consider the next steps in our school roadmap journey.

After Easter we still have to abide by the strict Government requirements about social distancing, bubbles and staggered starts and finishes. However, we will be trialling some slightly revised times based on the feedback we have received from yourselves for the Summer term. The academies have worked very closely together to agree the new proposed hours and are aware that different sites present some challenges.

During the trial, if you experience particular challenges, please contact your academy office by email [grove@espritmat.org](mailto:grove@espritmat.org) immediately and explain the challenge. This will then be reviewed quickly to see if it can be overcome.

Trustees wish to reassure parents / carers that in agreeing the new school hours we have ensured that all children will be receiving the legal amount of teaching time. Direct teaching time is calculated by taking out lunchtimes, playtime, registration and assemblies. In this trial, Northwood and Hamilton children will receive 23 hours and 25 minutes of teaching time compared to the 22 hours and 30 minutes they received before the pandemic. Grove children will be receiving 24 hours and 20 minutes of direct teaching time compared to the 22 hours and 55 minutes they received before the pandemic. Whilst there is no national expectation for academies, these hours appear to be at least in-line with other infant and junior schools nationally. There will be no remote learning set unless schools are closed again or bubbles close due to coronavirus.

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**Starting on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2021, the school hours will be:**

Academy	Phase / year group	Start time	Finish Monday to Thursday	Finish time Friday
Infant (Northwood and Hamilton)	Nursery	8:40 am	2:40pm	2:40pm
	Reception	8:45 am	2:45pm	2:45pm
	Year 1	8:50 am	2:50pm	2:50pm
	Year 2	8:55 am	2:55pm	2:55pm
Junior (Grove)	Year 6	8:20 am	3:00 pm	12:30 pm
	Year 5	8:20 am	3:00 pm	12:30 pm
	Year 4	8:25 am	3:05 pm	12:35 pm
	Year 3	8:30 am	3:10 pm	12:40 pm

The new hours mean that slightly different arrangements will apply at each school. Therefore, in order to minimise disruption to working parents/carers, Grove will continue to offer childcare on a Friday afternoon, until the end of the school day. As this is now changing from supervised learning to childcare, this provision will now be facilitated by our superb BASC (Before and After School Club). Pupils attending this provision will be able to take part in a wide range of quality activities, including sport, craft, games consoles, snooker, etc. Our aim is to tailor this provision to the interests of the children, so it will change regularly. We will now need to make a minimal charge for this session.

- From Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> April, if your child(ren) will require childcare until the new hours (table above), you will now need to book and pay in advance via ParentPay should you require this arrangement. **(bookable link to follow via text/dojo).**
- If your child(ren) currently attends our BASC on a Friday afternoon, please continue to use the booking and payment process for your 4pm/5.45pm session as usual.
- If your child(ren) attends on Friday afternoon by invitation only, further information to follow.

Session	Cost
<b>Friday afternoon (new childcare session)</b> (end of school until 3.10pm)	£5.00 <i>(place to be booked and paid for via ParentPay by Thursday of the PRIOR week to ensure that 7 clear days' notice is provided)</i>

I reiterate that this is a genuine trial for children, families and staff and we will seek feedback from you via a survey in May before setting school hours for September. You are bound to have ideas that we haven't thought of so we would really encourage you to share any possible suggestions for improvements by emailing into your academy's office. After May half-term we will circulate a survey to collate feedback.



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Many thanks for your continued support as we continue to work together to navigate our way out of this pandemic!

Yours faithfully

Mrs S Moran  
Executive Principal