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Dear Home Educators

## EHE UPDATE FEBRUARY 2021

I hope this update finds you and your families safe and well. Whilst we wait patiently for the roadmap, I wanted to inform you of a few new items and a few reminders.

Firstly, the team is still here to support whilst we work remotely. Visits can take place virtually should you require one and we are still contacting you in line with our published policies. Some members of the community have been asking about new resources, especially to stimulate writing and discussion whilst you are limited on visits. One I'd like to bring to your attention is called The Literacy Shed. They use short animations of books and discussion starters with high quality videos to stimulate conversation, writing and imagination around sports, myths, robots, sci-fi, poetry, other cultures, inventions, music and others. <https://www.literacyshed.com/>

You can also find links to other free resources on our list at <https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/childrensservices/schoolsandlearning/lis/homeed.asp>.

Though many of you have been home educators for several years, many families are new, hence my prompts. Please remember that whilst many resources state a specific year group or age, they can be used across different ages and stages of development.

I am aware that many people are currently being stretched financially due to being furloughed or if you are struggling for any reason at the moment. You can access the county council's Support Helpline on 0800 783 1966 (Monday to Thursday 9am to 5pm, Friday 9am to 4.30pm). The supportive staff will talk to you and suggest ways to help.

You can also email [COVID19support@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:COVID19support@cumbria.gov.uk) and you will receive a response within one working day.

We have had a significant number of additional home educators registering with us and we are at 640 across the county. We are aware that some have chosen home education due to reasons related to COVID and intend to return to school at some point soon. For these families, I suggest sticking closely to the school curriculum to ease transition on return. Of course, legally as a home educator you are free to choose your own curriculum/ course of study.

Some of you have concerns around exams. We are currently waiting for Ofqual's response to the consultation which ran in January. Ofqual stated:

Students need grades to continue to the next stage of their education or training, or into employment. Grades must reflect what a student knows, understands and can do, and they must be widely understood and respected. In place of exams in summer 2021 we propose that a student's grade in a subject will be based on their teacher's assessment of the standard at which they are performing.

*Together we can achieve the best for every child, young person and their family in Cumbria*

This presents home educators, who have been working independently with some difficulty as it did last year. I have highlighted this in meetings with the DfE and the North West Regional Schools Team. The link to the latest update: <https://ofqual.blog.gov.uk/2021/01/29/consultation-update-and-a-proposal-for-externally-set-papers/> . I will update you specifically about qualifications once further information is published.

I am aware of an increase in the number of home educators who were receiving support for SEND in school prior to de-registering. I shall shortly be sending a link to a survey to some families. If you could complete the survey it would really help in assessing needs and shaping services.

Please feel free to contact us at any time with queries.

Best wishes with your home education  
Marie

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