



Pupil, Parent and Carer Update – 21st April 2020

Welcome back to the new term to all of our school community. I hope you were all able to have some kind of restful holiday and are ready for what will be a term 4 like no other. As you all know the school remains closed and it looks like that will be the case for some time yet. I hope you are all coping as well as can be expected in these challenging times. Despite some coverage in the press recently about schools opening the Scottish Government have been clear that schools will only reopen when the scientists and experts say it will be safe to do so. I want to share with you some important updates and our plans for the new term.

SQA Update

The SQA have been busy with contingency planning to ensure that pupils who would be completing National Qualifications at all levels will not be disadvantaged this year. You will all be aware that no exams will be taking place this summer. Many of you will have seen the information that course assignments at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher which form part of the final grade will not be marked. Some of these had already been sent to SQA and some had not as the pick up date was after the Easter holidays.

Results this year across Scotland will be largely determined by teacher professional judgement at all levels from National 1 through to Advanced Higher. Please be reassured that these estimates and teacher professional judgements are based on a breadth of evidence – class work, homework, project work, mini assessments, previous attainment where appropriate as well as Prelim exam grades. The estimates that are submitted to SQA take into account all of these factors as well as individual circumstances and are not solely based on marks achieved in the prelim exams.

The school is following all the SQA guidance and advice that has been issued up to now which is designed to ensure fair, consistent and reliable approaches across the country.

There is more information available for pupils and parents at the FAQ section of the SQA website :

<https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/93797.9752.html>

The National Parent Forum of Scotland also have a SQA FAQ section which is very useful. You can access this at :

<https://www.npfs.org.uk/2020/04/16/update-from-the-sqa-qualifications/>

Term 4 Online Learning and Change of Timetable

Just as before the holidays the one stop shop for access to all of our online learning is the school website front page. You will see there is a link to S1-S3 learning and another link to Senior Phase S4-S6 learning. Many teachers will also be using Microsoft Teams and Google

Classroom to set learning tasks and activities. The school and subject twitter accounts will also be posting regular updates, learning challenges and advice.

For pupils currently in S3, S4 and S5 : increasingly you will begin to see teachers posting work to get you started on your new National Qualification courses. We want you to get a head start on your learning for your new courses before the timetable changes. You will know what subjects you have chosen and many of these subjects will be posting links to reading, research and tasks which will support your transition to your new subjects. Another very useful online resource to start accessing is **Scholar**. You can access Scholar at :

scholar.hw.ac.uk

Some of you will already have scholar log in details and if so you can access the site through Glow. For current S3 pupils moving into S4 or if you don't have a log in there is open access to the resource through the link above. You need the following details :

Username : ORG5397538

Password : mof9yem

You will find lessons, videos, reading, presentations and tasks for most of the National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses we offer.

The timetable for current S3, S4 and S5 will change one week earlier than stated in the school calendar to allow you to start with your new teachers earlier. We are aiming for this to happen on 11th May 2020. We are working to finalise the timetable and let you know your new teachers and classes in the run up to this date. Your new teachers will be busy creating new Microsoft Teams and Google Classrooms to begin to teach you remotely from that date.

For pupils currently in S1 and S2 : you'll continue to access your work as you were doing before the holidays with the same teachers. We plan for you to move into your new timetable on 18th May 2020. We will let you know your new teachers and classes in the run up to this date.

As you will all appreciate there are added challenges in managing this whole process while schools are closed and we are in lock down. There may be some changes to our plans and timing because of this but we will keep you informed and up to date. Watch this space!

Digital Access

We know that not everyone has the same level of digital access and this can impact on your ability to get the most from online learning. Parents and carers will soon receive a very short survey so we can better understand some of the challenges some of you face and provide any support we can to improve access to learning. In the mean-time please contact your Pupil Care & Support teacher by email if you are experiencing difficulties in accessing the work and they will try and help you out.

Health and Wellbeing

Across the whole of the school community families are experiencing the challenges of living in lockdown. Even the most resilient of us will be feeling the pressures as we adjust to new ways of living and working. We have added a Health and Wellbeing section to our website which contains some great practical advice and wellbeing activities for our whole school community. Much of this comes from our school counselling provider – New Solutions. Make sure you check it out. Remember too that our Pupil Care & Support team are available to support pupils and parents with advice, a listening ear and can signpost to other agencies and support should that be required. Their email addresses are available on the website and the PC&S twitter account.

Forfar Academy PPE Heroes

Hopefully you will have seen that our Design and Technology staff along with some of our Support Assistants have spent the holidays using our equipment to produce much needed PPE for the NHS and other care providers. They have done an amazing job giving up holidays to help out with producing over 500 protective visors. Thank you also to our great Parent Council who have donated £300 for materials to be purchased to allow the production to continue.

S3 Battlefields Trip Refunds

We have been working hard to get refunds parents and carers are due to you as quickly as possible. You should have been contacted by the school about arrangements for this. If you haven't been contacted please get in touch via email.

Forfar Academy Daily Quiz

Following on from the very successful FA Toilet Roll Challenge Cup Mr Martin has launched the Forfar Academy Daily Quiz. Make sure you check out the school website each day to hear the 10 questions, post your answers and even submit a video of you asking your own 10 questions we will use. Parents – get involved too and see if you can out do your children!

Finally...

To all of you parents supporting your children with their learning - remember there is no right or wrong way to do this. Whatever you are trying to do to support your children will be having a positive impact. Don't be too hard on yourselves and remember that we will get through this and out the other side. Everybody across the school community, whatever their role is trying to do the best job that they can and we have seen some amazing examples of this across our school community in the last few weeks. Until our next update...

Stay strong, stay safe and take care

Kas Mohamed
Head Teacher