

25th January 2021

Dear Parents, Carers and Pupils,

I hope you are all well, safe and coping with the challenges of this latest lockdown. Writing this update in a mostly empty school during a time when it should be alive with the buzz of learning and the sounds of a typical school day reinforces how much I am missing the day to day interaction with young people and staff. Of course the school has never been closed, learning continues and those interactions are now “remote” but let’s hope we are not too far from returning to normality.

You will be aware that the Scottish Government has announced that pupils and staff will not be returning to school on 1st February due to continuing concerns about the number of positive cases and levels of transmission. They have stated that we are now looking at mid-February and this will be reviewed at the start of February. They have also spoken about a possible phased return to school with not all pupils returning at the same time. As always we will keep you updated about return to school plans as soon as we receive further information. This is not the news we were all hoping for but of course we understand the need to ensure the health and safety of our communities and the requirement across society to do all we can to reduce transmission. I am sure we are all continuing to reinforce the message to our children about following the Level 4 restrictions and rules.

SQA Update

We know that this is a really difficult time for our senior phase pupils who are taking National Qualifications this year. Because of lockdown pupils have not been able to complete assessments during the planned assessment windows we had planned. Please do not worry about this. National SQA guidance states that at this time all schools should be focusing on the learning and teaching of the courses rather than assessment and that more assessing towards the end of courses will result in more reliable assessment. Subject teachers are up to date in their understanding of the guidance SQA has produced for gathering evidence and SQA have made a number of adjustments in how evidence can be captured taking into account the move to remote learning. Many assessments can be adjusted to take place during class time when pupils return to in-school learning. Across the country all senior phase pupils are in exactly the same situation and in some ways we are in a better position as, due to the lack of positive cases in our school, learning had not been disrupted from August to December. We will give pupils plenty of notice about plans for assessment once we are back in school.

Learner journey and subject choice planning

This is the time in the school year when pupils in different year groups make choices for next session.

S2 into S3 personalisation and choice : We have already completed the S2 into S3 personalisation and choice procedure where pupils choose subjects within the curricular areas for S3.

S3 into S4 : Last week on the website we published a presentation and information for current S3 pupils and parents on making choices for S4, the first year of the Senior Phase and the first year of sitting national qualifications. Please have a look at this if you have not already done so. Pupil Care & Support teachers are arranging Teams meets for one to one interviews for pupils in S3 to support

them in thinking about their choices. We will shortly make “live” our S3 into S4 course choice sheet for pupils to let us know their choices and we’ll let you know when this goes live.

S4/S5 into S5/S6 : Within in the next couple of weeks Pupil Care & Support teachers will be running a presentation on choices for our current S4 and S5 during their live PSE lessons. They will also be setting up virtual meetings with pupils to support them in their choices. Again, the pupils will make their choices electronically and we will let you know when their option choice sheet goes live.

Remote Learning Update

I am overwhelmed with how well our school community has risen – once again – to the challenges of remote learning. We can never replicate the school day at home, and shouldn’t try to, but we have applied what we learned in the first lockdown to try and make remote learning as straightforward as possible for our pupils. Here are the top ‘Do’s and ‘Don’t’s for our pupils:

Tip	Do	Don’t
Organising your day and week	<p>Get into a routine. Get up, showered and ready for a decent time each day.</p> <p>Follow your timetable if it helps you to organise your time. Or, why not make up a timetable of your own that covers all your subjects and suits your family life?</p>	<p>Leave everything until the end of the week or jump around between different subjects without actually finishing anything.</p>
Making the most of the learning	<p>For each subject, find the weekly overview. Most of the time this is in the General or Weekly Channel in the Team.</p> <p>Pick-up some resources from our free collection box in Asda if you need them (pens, paper, colouring materials...). Get in touch with your PC&S teacher if you need anything else.</p> <p>Think about “what am I trying to learn?”</p>	<p>Don’t go straight to the Assignment or hand-in and submit that without working your way through the tasks or instructions. Spend time reading the notes or watching the lessons or clips.</p> <p>Avoid thinking simply “what have I got to get done?”</p>
Live sessions	<p>Get ready in a space you can work so you feel confident enough to put your camera on. You will get much more out of the discussion if you do!</p> <p>Be prepared to answer questions by using the chat function, interactive whiteboards or simply taking your mic off mute and talking!</p>	<p>Don’t lie in bed with your camera off because you are still in your pyjamas eating crisps! You will get much more out of the lesson if you are able to participate.</p> <p>Record the session or take screenshots or photos during it. You wouldn’t do this during a real lesson in school, and the same rules about consent for images still apply.</p>

	<p>Before the session, think about areas you do and don't understand. Make the most of the chance to ask questions or for a bit of extra help.</p> <p>Behave appropriately in all sessions.</p>	
Staying healthy	<p>Take regular breaks. Have some healthy snacks and drink plenty of water.</p> <p>Get outside at least once a day (in accordance with instructions from the government and your parents!)</p> <p>Get away from your screen regularly and make sure you turn off all technology two hours before you want to go to sleep.</p> <p>Keep in touch with friends and relatives.</p> <p>Look out for some top tips during your PSHE sessions (and have a look at the ideas on this page https://www.annafreud.org/on-my-mind/self-care/)</p>	<p>Don't feel bad if you are trying your best and still find things overwhelming.</p> <p>Living and learning like this is challenging for everyone and we will all have good days and bad days. Talk to your PC&S teacher if you are finding things tough. (Just email them and ask them for a call or ask to hang on at the end of a PSHE lesson).</p>

Remember you can get in touch with the school at any time – through emailing the Pupil Care and Support teachers or dropping an email to the school email address which is checked each day. Let us know if there is anything we can do to help.

Stay strong, stay safe and take care.

Mr K.Mohamed

Head Teacher