



1. School Building Closures

On Saturday 19th December, the decision was taken not to re-open school buildings after Christmas (for most learners). It must be noted that we closed for our Christmas break on Friday 18th December.

School staff returned to work on Wednesday 6th January and have had thirteen working days since. It is important that what is shared hereafter is understood against the timeframe detailed above.

School remains open to Children of Key Workers and pupils regarded as vulnerable, either by school staff or colleagues within social services. The total number of pupils registered across both categories sits at around forty-five, with daily attendance rates as low as four, and has high as twenty-six.

All learners, regardless of the location of their learning, are completing activities and tasks set online, including via live lessons and drop-in sessions.

IT Access

Inevitably, some families and/or learners have experienced access issues, and support has been offered via email and device drop offs/repairs.

As was the case during the first lockdown, the vast majority were resolved and could be addressed by following the extensive guidance shared via our website/app/Facebook on several occasions.

YouTube access via EAC devices is not possible and will not be possible. File access issues via EAC devices when using Google Classroom are being looked at by IT but the issue persists for now. The workaround for both is to use a mobile phone.

Mr Kane today shared steps with staff to transfer the location of stored files shared on Google Classrooms as an interim solution.

We have issued around forty iPad, using a mixture of the Scottish government devices and our own stock of older devices.

There is an issue with the MiFi digital access boxes we received which is being worked on by colleagues in IT. The families of those without internet access were offered a place in school in the interim.

We received 197 response to our access form.

189 could access Teams

185 could access Google Classrooms

A small number of those to have responded late are awaiting feedback from Mr Kane but will receive this tomorrow morning. The second follow up on common problems e.g., access to live lessons is partially complete.

Directory of Classes

Staff collated and shared a directory of where work could be found for each class group in the school. This was shared online, via the app, Facebook and website. It was also shared with pupils.

Satchel: One – Show My Homework

We re-issued around sixty parent codes for parental access to Satchel: One 'Show My Homework'. Access across the parent forum sits at 29.44% as of this afternoon.




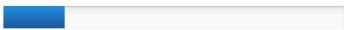


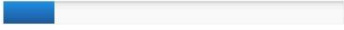
Staff have shared a total of 942 notifications since returning to school. Some are reminders as to the timing of lessons and drop-in sessions.

There are concerns from staff as to the number of parents/carers yet to check the system as it is the only means by which we can share work set.

Show statistics from 06/01/2021 - 25/01/2021 

Table shows homework tasks created each week in the above timeframe

 Hide empty homework rows

| Year Groups  | Quantity  | | Percentage |
|---|--|--|------------|
| S1 | 193 |  | 20.49% |
| S2 | 174 |  | 18.47% |
| S3 | 206 |  | 21.87% |
| S4 | 225 |  | 23.89% |
| S5 | 144 |  | 15.29% |

Frequently Asked Questions

On January 15th, Mr Kane shared a FAQ post via the website, app and Facebook. It remains pinned to the homepage and addresses the following questions. The full post is shared as an appendix.

- Will reports still be issued?
- What will happen to the S2, S3, S4 and S5 options programme?
- How do I know what work has been set for my child/children?
- How much time spent on schoolwork is too little, too much or the right balance?
- Sometimes my son/daughter receives a lot more than four hours' work a day, sometimes a lot less, what should I do?
- If we are aiming for four hours per day, why are you advising that pupils follow their normal timetable?
- My son/daughter logs in at around 12pm but struggles to find work from their morning classes. When my son/daughter contacts staff, they do not receive a response until later that day or the next day, why is this?
- Why are all lessons not 'live' lessons?

Live Lessons and Live 'drop-in' sessions

During the first lockdown, almost no live lessons were offered. This was not to do with a lack of willingness but was a combination of a lack of hardware and lack of familiarity with software.

Teaching unions have notified all members of the fact that there is no contractual obligation to deliver live lessons. As such it cannot be mandated, nor would constant live lessons in a Secondary context be in the best interests of learners or staff.

It should also be noted that some staff are also home schooling and cannot offer live lessons in current circumstances.

So far, of the 26 of our 51 staff have offered live lessons across all departments. This is an encouraging start and staff have adapted well to offering live lessons. However, a consistent theme emerging from staff is that pupil engagement levels are very, very low, with less than 50% attendance the norm, and extremes whereby only three of twenty-seven pupils attended lessons as part of an N5 S4 course, and at the other extreme, a small number of classes have 90% attendance rates.

In terms of live drop-in sessions, 29 of 51 staff offered live drop-ins.

Initially, staff were working towards planning to deliver online learning for a three-week period. This led to the prioritisation of online lessons and drop-ins for those in S4-S6. Of the 29 offering live lessons, 26 have offered live lessons to S5/6 groups, with four offering sessions to S1 groups. This represents the extremes by year group.

In time, staff who are offering online are planning to increase the frequency of live delivery for S1-S3 classes.

The biggest issue from a teaching perspective is engagement levels. If staff are using their time to stream a live lesson, and most of the class do not attend, the parents/carers of those not in attendance still expect work to be set. To do so and offer live lessons is not possible.

Activities

Staff are uploading a variety of activities. This includes but is not limited to:

- Live lessons
- Live drop-in sessions
- Breakout drop-ins, small groups or one to one
- Voice over PowerPoints
- Links to pre-recorded YouTube lessons created by St. Joseph's staff
- Loom videos
- Online booklets
- Interactive resources
- Screencasts/sharing screens

General engagement from young people

We know that since Christmas, only thirty-two pupils have not been able to access Glow. The thirty-two are either Christmas Leavers, or have difficulty engaging with school when fully open. We continue to follow up with those young people and their families.

Staff have ongoing concerns around pupil engagement levels, with many reporting that they are contacting pupils via glow mail and receiving no response. Often, pupils will email staff to say that they cannot complete work. When staff try to make further contact, no response is forthcoming.

Last week, we shared the fact that Principal Teachers will begin to make direct contact with parents/carers via email. This will begin with those in S4-S6 where staff have concerns about the completion of work.

Pastoral Care

Our Pastoral staff are working through check-ins with all parents/carers via phone call. In addition, Pastoral staff maintain near daily contact with the most vulnerable pupils. Some of our vulnerable pupils have declined access to school.

Our priority from a Pastoral sense will always be those most vulnerable. However, we recognise that a more regular drop in could be of benefit to all pupils. House group drop-in sessions are scheduled to begin during the first week in February, where pupils will have the chance to check in with their pastoral teacher if they wish.

We will not facilitate online social time. Firstly, during break and lunch in school the pupil to staff ratio is around 1 adult to 100 pupils. To try to create social 'Teams' to reflect break and lunch would be counterproductive in that all 100 pupils would need to access the same area simultaneously to hold hundreds of conversations. Staff would then have to ensure no inappropriate content etc. were discussed or shared. This is not a prudent use of staff time. Smaller groups cannot be managed by school staff given the staff to pupil ratio.

Secondly, pupils almost all have the means to contact their close friends via social media or zoom and are not likely to want teaching staff to be present during social times.

Options

SLT staff are working to launch virtual options, likely next week. The guidance document is extensive and video/voice over presentations will be included with input from Ayrshire College and SDS. As an example, the S5/6 guidance runs to well over one hundred pages (course specifications included).

Jotter and Resource distribution

Only a handful of staff are working in school. As mentioned earlier, we have dropped of a significant number of devices. We have also dropped off food for some families, gathered directly from staff.

Plans for jotter distribution this Wednesday were shared yesterday, with timings to follow tomorrow.

Art and Graphics portfolios were delivered to pupils and Musical instruments will go out this week.

We cannot issue jotters from classes for two reasons.

1. As with all workplaces, we are to minimise the number of staff in school and mitigate against handling items where possible

2. The scale of the task is such that we would have to collate potentially 5,000 jotters, then re-order them by pupil prior to distribution

Had we had any advance notice of closure we could have actioned this in the last week of term.

2. Staffing

The following appointments have been made since our last meeting:

| | |
|--|----------------|
| Teacher of History (Covering 0.4 Secondment) | Mr A Macdonald |
|--|----------------|

Start date to follow.

Appendix 1 - Lockdown Schooling – Frequently Asked Questions – January 2021

January 15, 2021 by Mr Kane

Dear Parents/Carers,

As was the case during the first lockdown, our Frequently Asked Questions page is designed as a reference point for you until our building re-opens to all pupils. This page will be updated regularly in response to questions that recur in correspondence with you.

SQA matters are not addressed here but will be addressed separately when we receive further clarity from the SQA and/or Scottish Government. Help with ICT issues and where to find work within Glow are addressed in guidance which can be found here:

[Support with IT issues during lockdown](#)
[Directory of classes](#)

Frequently Asked Questions – January 2021

Please do not harbour questions or concerns. As you know, I am always keen that you contact school staff should you require clarity on any aspect of school life.

The answers offered below are shared to try to provide reassurance and to address some common concerns that you may have. As a parent of six children, four of whom are of school age, I do fully understand the difficulties associated with home learning. I share the undernoted in solidarity with you as a fellow parent but hope to also offer some observations from a professional viewpoint.

Some of the observations shared below may appear to be self-explanatory but recent correspondence leads me to believe that there is some anxiety around these aspects of online learning.

Will reports still be issued?

Yes, we are going to issue reports, albeit issue dates are likely to change. We will confirm revised dates soon, and staff are already working on planned tracking and reporting.

What will happen to the S2, S3, S4 and S5 options programme?

Our options programme will still run but will be delayed slightly. We currently anticipate that options information will be shared with you during the week beginning Monday 1st February. The information we release will specify turnaround times, access to support and direction as to how to complete the options process remotely.

How do I know what work has been set for my child/children?

When pupils are learning online, it can be difficult for parents/carers to know of the quantity of work set week to week. This is particularly true in a secondary environment, where one pupil can have up to fourteen different teachers.

In a typical school week, we teach around 1100 lessons at St. Joseph's Academy. Sometimes, a piece of work is started and completed in a single lesson, while at other times, work to be submitted extends over several days or weeks. Trying to provide parents/carers with notice of every single activity issued across 1100 lessons would only serve to cause anxiety and stress for pupils, parents/carers and staff. In addition, there is no mechanism within Glow, Teams or Google Classrooms to allow for easy parental notification of work set. My advice for how we may manage this together is two-fold.

Firstly, staff are sharing expectations with young people directly via Teams and Google Classrooms. In most cases, discussion with young people will give you a good indication of how much work they must strive to complete. Similarly, sitting with young people for a short period to check each Team or Classroom online may also allow you to keep track of work set. In my own experience as a parent, the above sounds straightforward. However, in practice it is not always possible, not least when you may also be working from home/juggling other pressures at home and there are many different Teams/Classrooms per pupil.

My second offering in this regard is around use of Satchel: One (previously called Show My Homework). In its own right, Satchel: One is an excellent resource for sharing homework deadlines with parents/carers. It is not designed as a log of class-based tasks or assessments but can be used for this purpose.

While by no means a perfect solution for parents/carers or teaching staff, it does provide us with a mechanism by which we can share some of the tasks set and associated deadlines. Use of Satchel: One will complement the extensive teacher-to-pupil expectation sharing which already takes place via Glow.

Between our return to work on Wednesday 6th January and Friday 15th January, our staff shared detail of around 370 activities/tasks/lessons set this week. Some staff are also sharing the timings of live lessons to ensure that you are aware of when young people should be available to join online.

The system currently shows that parental access to Satchel: One sits at around **19%** since Christmas. You may feel entirely comfortable with what you can gather from discussion with your children, but the system is there to support you should you wish. It may also prevent against a situation whereby perception of the amount of work set and the actual amount of work set are significantly different.

Office staff are available via a telephone call during school hours and can re-issue access codes for Satchel: One. Alternatively, you can use our Contact Us page to request the code you require. You can download the Satchel: One app for free from the app store linked to your device.

How much time spent on schoolwork is too little, too much or the right balance?

I wish to stress that while there is no correct answer to the above, there are some important points to consider prior to forming a reasoned opinion on the matter.

A good starting point is to think of the amount of time spent on tasks when in school. Being at school and completing tasks at school are not the same thing. Each day, time is naturally given over to break, lunch, travel to and from school, transient movement between rooms, resource collection, changing for PE etc. These times at school facilitate social interaction and time spent with friends and are important for the mental and emotional wellbeing of our young people.

It is also true that not all time spent in class is devoted to written activity or formal completion of work. Some time is given over to social aspects of learning as well as routine interaction with staff and peers.

The above is not always easily recognised as adults, as we are often used to working different shift patterns or longer days, whether as a stay-at-home parent or within employment. A school day for pupils will not equate to a typical working day for adults. It is important to recognise that the likely time spent on completing tasks for teenagers when in school is around twenty hours per week. This would equate to four hours per day.

It is also important to recognise that we are trying to balance the circumstances of over six hundred families. Opinion on the time taken to complete work varies from family to family, and this is entirely understandable. Circumstances from home to home are not the same. For this reason, what may be perceived as too much against one set of circumstances may be viewed as too little in another. Staff cannot possibly have an awareness of the day-to-day circumstance of each family within our community, but we should be held to reasonable account against what would be appropriate for a typical school week. Twenty hours' worth of

focussed work when at home is no mean feat for teenagers and those supporting them but is a reasonable aspiration for our young people in the current circumstances.

Sometimes my son/daughter receives a lot more than four hours' worth of work per day, and sometimes a lot less, what should I do?

The above is not to say that your personal circumstances will always allow for four hours of schoolwork per day, nor is it to promise that the work issued will always equate to four hours per day. However, it gives all concerned a realistic starting point when trying to understand how much time is needed to reflect that which would be experienced when in school.

We will not always get this right, and on some days, you may find that young people are issued with more work, on others less. This is because there are 1100 lessons per week in our school. On average, each lesson is attended by 25 pupils. It follows that there are approximately 27,500 different instances of engagement per week. To expect that agreement on appropriate depth across all 27,500 instances of engagement is possible, is highly unrealistic. It will naturally take time to get the right balance across stages and for all pupils.

That said, persistent concern as to the volume of work issued should be directed to me via the Contact Us page.

Where your son/daughter is electing not to complete work for certain subjects, it would be natural to find that the amount of work they will have to complete will be significantly less than what you would expect. For this reason, we advocate use of Satchel: One (Show My Homework) to monitor engagement levels. S6 pupils studying three or four subjects are also likely to find that they have less work to complete than they would have done if studying five subjects.

Finally, it should also be noted that we will not ignore provision in some subjects to enhance that in others. For example, if you wish your son/daughter to receive more Maths work at the expense of completing work for their other subjects, this will not happen, and is a very different issue to a situation whereby the breadth of the curriculum does not provide enough work to engage learners across the totality of a school week.

If we are aiming for four hours per day, why are you advising that pupils follow their normal timetable?

When we say that pupils should follow their normal timetable, we mean that teaching staff will be available to respond to emails and questions or will offer live lessons during the times when they would normally have worked with a class group. If a pupil emails a teacher during their normal class time, then in most cases, they should receive a response. If they email or make contact outwith their normal class time, pupils should expect that a response will follow the next time that the teacher has that class. Staff will of course endeavour to feedback quickly but will be working with another group of pupils during the next period and so on.

We do fully recognise that some pupils, parents and teachers will not always be available at timetabled times as others within your homes or that of our staff may need access to IT for home learning or home-schooling purposes.

My son/daughter logs in at around 12pm but struggles to find work from their morning classes. When my son/daughter contacts staff, they don't receive a response until later that day or the next day, why is this?

This is because staff and pupils should generally follow their normal timetable as explained above. If a pupil is not starting until 12pm, then they have effectively missed three lessons already and are trying to catch up. The staff teaching those lessons will be available to another group of pupils at 12pm.

Naturally, staff always endeavour to respond as they receive messages, but if we do not try to follow our timetable in terms of contact with staff and pupils then it becomes an unmanageable free for all.

It is important that young people are supported to engage in online learning from 8.50am where at all possible.

Why are all lessons not 'live' lessons?

Firstly, if all lessons were 'live' we would be asking pupils to engage with back-to-back video content for 26 hours per week. For me, this is not appropriate nor conducive to the wellbeing of our learners.

Secondly, and in our experience since the start of term, attendance at the live online lessons we are running sits at 20% per class group. This is despite a very healthy figure of 96% of pupils signing in to Glow this week.

If we adopted an approach whereby all available teaching time was devoted to real-time online lessons, then our current evidence base shows that 80% of our pupils would not participate. On occasion, pupils could watch recorded content, but the reality is that those to miss two or three lessons in a subject would end up significantly behind their classmates with little to no available teacher time left to address their needs. Staff cannot simultaneously deliver live lessons and follow up with the 80% not in attendance. Until young people begin to attend the live lessons we do offer, we are unable to enhance the provision that currently exists.

The above is further exacerbated by the fact that attendance at afternoon sessions is higher than that at morning sessions. If young people are missing morning sessions due to their sleep pattern, then we would strongly advocate establishment of the same morning routines as were in place before Christmas. As always, we do appreciate that there may be other personal reasons for a change in routine, but staff availability to deliver live lessons sits directly against our lesson timings.

Thirdly, not all pupils or tasks require direct teacher input at all times. This is true of normal schooling too.

Our model now demonstrates that we are gradually increasing the number of live lessons. We are also offering some live drop-in sessions, and I anticipate that as staff and pupils begin to grow in confidence, the number of live sessions on offer will continue to increase. However, for the reasons detailed above, it will never increase to cover the totality of the curriculum.