



Education, Communities & Organisational Development

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Dear Parent/Carer

The start to 2021 has been far from normal for you or for ourselves with a new lockdown preventing the return to school or nursery as expected. You have your children at home with you for longer than expected and now have the additional challenge of once again supporting remote learning. We thank you all most sincerely once again for your patience and understanding as remote learning is being developed and plans continue to be shared with you.

We totally appreciate the strain this has put on everyone, including many of our own staff who also juggle working from home whilst supporting their own children. Some of you will naturally be concerned that you are not able to fully help and support your children and if this is the case please do not hesitate to contact the school in the first instance. If this is due to digital access problems please use the parent app and also contact your school directly. We are aware that some of you are concerned that there is too much work which is overwhelming for yourselves and your children and for others that there is not enough and that children may fall behind. For a few, this lockdown is proving too difficult particularly if your own circumstances have changed. We fully understand each position and for our staff this is also a challenge as they try and support you all. Please be assured that we aim to strike the right balance. Your children's wellbeing is the most important thing and of course that of all the family and so contact the school to discuss your concerns or worries and they will do everything they can. Please don't feel too worried or pressured as we fully appreciate that you too may be juggling work and home responsibilities and perhaps other things too. If your children are struggling, please contact your school to talk this through.

Our staff have been proactive since schools returned in August to reflect and learn from the previous lockdown. Digital skills and access have continued to be developed and so we were in a much better position to move to remote learning. For your information a range of Remote Learning approaches are being embraced to support all learners appropriate to age and stage while taking into account home circumstances and support available at home. This includes online learning, physical resource packs, paper-based resources, regular check-ins, live learning and teaching, pre-recorded learning sessions including voiceover PowerPoints, weekly learning grids, learning challenges and embracing other learning offers (e.g. Education Scotland, Scholar, e-Sgoil, BBC Scotland). This also follows from previous lockdown and feedback from our learners, parents/carers and schools through online surveys gathering information on their remote learning experience. In line with all guidance available including Trade Union advice, live lessons are being provided in a number of our schools by practitioners who are comfortable in doing so using all functionality available within GLOW. Other schools are embracing partnership live learning offers. All are mindful for balance of on-screen and off-screen time and need to vary pedagogical

approaches for pace and challenge, and meeting learning needs. We also have to take in to consideration the individual circumstances of our staff as they are delivering learning from their own homes.

Support and guidance sources for Parents/Guardians/Learners

Digital Support Site – The website created to help parents/carers support learners in accessing Glow and staying safe online has recently been updated. The aim of this resource is help understand what Glow is and what it offers and how learners can access their learning in Microsoft Teams or Google Classroom.

<https://sites.google.com/my.glow.scot/moraydigitalschoolshub/glow/google-classroom>

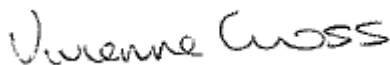
Digital Support Web App – There is an app too and content on both the app and website are similar; however, they have been created in different formats to support different devices. The web app can be accessed on your mobile/tablet device by going to your web browser and pasting the following address into the browser – **mdltdigitaladvice.glideapp.io** Please note this is a web app and not available for download through the usual app stores.

In addition, we were tasked with setting up childcare for key workers however this has been different to the March 2020 lockdown with this hub provision being set up in each school so that children of key workers can attend their own school. For those who have been granted childcare places, we hope that this is going well and that your children are settled in an environment which is known to them. Our rigorous hygiene processes remain in place with some enhanced mitigations now that we are in protection level 4. Unfortunately not all childcare requests were granted as, in line with the Scottish Government's guidance, both parents/single parent must be key worker(s) as defined for us. We must also keep numbers in schools and nurseries to a minimum in order to slow the transmission of Covid-19 and particularly the new strain which has a particularly high transmission rate.

Throughout the ongoing pandemic, we will continue to work with you and take on board your individual circumstances. Like you, this is new to us and so sometimes we may not get it right, however we will continue to look for ways to support your children in their learning as best we can.

None of us know how much longer this will go on for and we await announcements on any return to school. Please be assured that once we know what this will look like, we will be back in touch to keep you updated. In the meantime, please follow Scottish Government Guidance for lockdown and stay safe and well.

Yours sincerely



Vivienne Cross
Head of Education (Chief Education Officer)