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Dear Parents and Carers,

### **Remote / online learning**

I wanted to provide you with an update following three weeks of our remote / online learning programme.

Last week we received more than 350 responses to our parental and pupil online learning evaluations. Thank you very much for taking the time to respond.

Responses and comments from parents and young people were very positive. Thank you for your kind words of support.

Our digital learning team is now analysing your responses and suggestions which we will use to improve our online learning programme. We will post the questionnaires, our analysis of the responses and next steps on the school website in the days ahead.

We also met with over seventy young people (12 from each year group) over the past 2 weeks to ask them about their experiences of online learning at home. Their responses were also very positive. We have agreed to meet them again this week and continue with these meetings during this school closure.

The digital learning team has already processed focus group responses and this will form part of the data we will publish.

In the meantime, I wanted to share with you some of the responses we have had to our surveys and questionnaires. I hope that you will find them reassuring.

### **Young People Survey (229 responses)**

- Over 80 % of young people said they found it helpful to follow their timetable
- Only 5 young people said they did not have enough work to do. (41 said they had too much)
- 90% of young people said they had daily contact with their teachers
- 90% of young people said they found it easy to contact their guidance teacher or Year Head about worries or concerns
- 98% of young people said they were able to contact all their subject teachers about their online learning
- 90% of young people said they were provided with regular feedback about their progress with online learning in all subjects



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### **Parental Survey (126 responses)**

- 103 parents told us their child had accessed their learning 5 days per week
- 82 parents told us the amount of work provided online was just right (17 said they could with a bit more, 5 said their child was being asked to do too much)
- Only 8 parents did not find Microsoft Teams useful – everyone else found it really useful or extremely useful
- In their comments parents highlighted live lessons, good feedback from teachers, quick responses to questions, following the school timetable and the one to one support given by class teachers as positive features of our online learning programme

### **S1-6 Focus Groups (72 young people)**

- All pupils were able to access the online learning and liked being able to follow their timetable. They told us that it brings some normality to being at home, as they have a daily structure.
- All pupils agreed that they enjoyed the 'live' lessons from teachers where they would come on using their mic at the start of the period and teach and show them where the work was. They agreed that it is a good start to the lesson but would not want the teacher on speaking to them for the full time. They like to be set work and have time to complete it. They stated that about half of their lessons follow this format at the moment and they would prefer if they all were 'live'.
- Many pupils identified negatives as they miss the day-to-day interactions and their friends. They also don't like being stuck in the same place all day. We chatted about getting out for some fresh air during breaks and lunch and at the end of the school day. Some said that they did this.
- They liked the mix of delivery methods including worksheets, PPT's, PPT's with commentary and "live" lessons.
- They liked the fact that they can interact instantly with teachers using the Chat facility on Teams.
- Pupils told us that they receive regular feedback from their teachers about the work submitted. Most said that they upload their work as a photo or emailed a photo, but teachers were showing them to how to upload in different ways. They mostly get homework through teams assignments.
- Homework is also being given out. Some of this can be done in class time and teachers are available to help with that. Other homework is completed out with class time. They still receive feedback. Some pupils and parents are concerned that their child might be receiving too much homework on top of a heavy schedule of online learning.
- All students had received feedback from their December assessments and understood the feedback and areas for improvement.
- They felt that the work they are covering this time round, as well as the mode of delivery was a vast improvement on what happened during the last lockdown. They felt that this felt much more like a school day.
- It is clear from young people that teachers need to be flexible around completion times and submission dates for class work and homework – they can manage their work much better with flexible timings.

### **Attendance / Engagement**

We know that attendance at an online class is not the same as engagement with the learning.

You have been telling us that following normal timetable is helpful. We now also know that as teachers are taking note of attendance at the beginning of each class, young people are more likely to get up in the morning, get dressed, log on and engage with the online learning.

In addition to taking attendance, I have asked principal teachers to identify young people who are not engaging with the online learning. Year Heads and guidance teachers will then contact parents. I know there

may be a very good reason why your child has not engaged with the learning as fully as class teachers would like.

You and your child are able to make the best decisions and choices about the amount of learning and homework your child is able to undertake at this time. You will be able to have a discussion about this with your child's Year Head or guidance teacher when they contact you. During the conversation, you can let us know if there is anything worrying you or if there is anything we can do to support you or your family at this time.

### **Senior Phase Reports**

S4 reports will be sent to parents and carers on Monday 1 February 2021.

S5/6 reports will be sent to parents and carers week beginning 8 March 2021.

### **SQA Update**

I know SQA arrangements will be causing some anxiety for young people in senior phase and their parents.

For senior phase pupils our first priority is the provision of quality remote learning to help ensure they can continue to work towards completion of national qualification courses. Maximising learning and teaching is the current priority.

The other key issue from this extended period of remote learning is the extent to which we can provide enough good evidence to allow for certification.

The final date for schools and colleges to submit provisional grades to SQA has been changed from Friday 28 May 2021 to Friday 18 June 2021.

The school position is that assessment cannot be undertaken unless young people understand the foundations of their course content and have had time to consolidate their learning once they return to school. We are now planning for assessment of learner attainment later in the 2020-21 session – not immediately upon return to school but certainly there will be opportunities for assessments and evidence gathering in advance of 18 June 2021.

Much will depend on further announcements from Scottish Government. A further update on school closures is due tomorrow (2 February 2021) and this will affect when we are able to undertake assessment of learning for national qualification purposes. We will provide you with specific subject information and further updates and about our planning for national certification in the weeks ahead.

### **Contacting the school**

Please do not hesitate to contact the school as normal. We are here to take your calls if you need us. If we can assist with any matter related to online learning – or indeed anything else let us know.

With every best wish

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. S.', followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Mr Robert Smith

Acting Head Teacher