E-mail to all parents/carers 11/1/21

Dear Parents/ Carers

**Current school closure – until 1 February 2021**

Following the announcement by the First Minister on 4 January and from the letter from Mrs Budge’s on  6.1.21 you will be aware that “*all schools and early learning and childcare settings will now be closed to 1 February 2021, apart from for children of key workers and vulnerable children”*,  Mrs Budge also states in her letter, the safest place for your child is at home.

Children should only be in school if there is absolutely no alternative. If you have the option to and are working from home, your child should be at home. If you have alternative arrangements for older or younger siblings, could this be extended for your school age children? If you received a letter inviting your child to come to school, while your child is eligible to come in, we are not compelling you to send them in if you feel they would be better learning at home. We can discuss this on an individual basis. The Scottish Government want to keep as many children away from school as possible so we urge you all to make sure sending your child(ren) into school is a last resort and for the minimum amount of time. We need to do all we can to reduce the spread of Covid-19 and keep everyone safe.

**Remote Learning**

Recent advice from Education Scotland and the Education Recovery Group states:

*“Remote learning is learning that is* ***directed*** *by practitioners and* ***undertaken*** *by children and young people who are not physically with the practitioner while instruction is taking place.*

*Remote learning involves a combination of ‘live’ interactions between teacher and learners, and also learning which takes place away from the direct presence of the class teacher. It may involve a range of learning experiences which take place in a variety of learning spaces, including outdoors and includes active and physical learning.”*

Although children are not in school we are still maintaining delivery of education.  We are extremely keen to ensure that our learners continue with the progress they were making prior to Christmas. In order to do this we are encouraging them to engage as fully as they possibly can with the remote learning, either on their class team or in the class blog.  Please get in touch with your child’s teacher if your child is struggling with any aspects of remote learning.

Our attached contingency plan provides information about how we will deliver remote learning.  Class teachers will be planning a mix of online and offline activities and will be providing regular feedback to the learners. Learners will not be expected to engage in online learning for the entirety of the school day.  There will also be opportunites for teachers to interact with learners or post up clips to their class teams/blogs so that the pupils can see/hear their teacher.

As part of our remote teaching,  school staff may wish to deliver remote teaching into your home with live lessons or check ins with learners.  This may involve the use of video and audio. We believe that regular interactions between children and their teacher will increase motivation and improve engagement, this in turn will be of benefit to their education.  In order to do this we require consent from parents/carers and pupils – can you please complete the form from the link below at your earliest convenience?  <https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=oyzTzM4Wj0KVQTctawUZKU4F2NYZkC9JoBcK-mdVk4xUQ1VaVjdIVFNZSkRSWDZQNkFFV0lQRUw0WS4u>

We know that you  want the very best for their child(ren). We are not expecting you to be  teachers and we understand that many of you will be juggling work and childcare.

By reading the attached contingency plan, which we updated this month, you will find information on the platforms we are using to facilitate activities for the different classes.  On the class blog and team each class teacher will detail the activities to be undertaken by the children. Please encourage your child to engage in these activities and to get in touch with their class teachers if they are unsure of any aspect of their learning or require any additional support.

**Remote Learning – Help available**

If  there are any problems getting into GLOW, just email the pupil GLOW Support inbox at PUPILglowsupportshetland@shetland.gov.uk. Pupils should keep an eye on their Junk Mail too, as sometimes responses can be sent there. If pupils need help with a password, teachers can help reset these.

Please also refer to the COVID page of our school website for user manuals for GLOW and the Digital School Hub for further guidance.  <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/sh/digitalschoolhub/>

**School staffing**

All management team members, ASN teachers and the majority of our support staff are working in school.  Class teachers are predominately providing remote learning from home but some may be in school supporting the remote learning.

**Scottish Government Support**

The Scottish Government has noted that the following information is available to support parents and carers:

·         A [Parent Club COVID-19 internet microsite](https://www.parentclub.scot/topics/coronavirus), which contains advice on working from home whilst caring for children, advice on helping children with remote and blended learning as well as links to advice and support resources for parents of children with additional support needs;

·         Education Scotland’s [Parentzone Scotland](https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) website includes advice for parents, families and practitioners on supporting children and young people’s learning during COVID-19;

·         The [National Parent Forum Nutshell guide on blended learning](https://www.npfs.org.uk/downloads/blended-learning-nutshell/), published in August 2020. This joins further Nutshells on [Supporting Learning at Home during “lockdown”](https://www.npfs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/edd/2020/05/NPFS_learning-at-home_E.pdf) and on [online safety](https://www.npfs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/edd/2020/05/NPFS_online_safety_E.pdf), and

·         Education Scotland’s [Scotland Learns](https://education.gov.scot/improvement/scotland-learns/) initiative provides newsletters and online resources for teachers and for parents/carers.

We know that this could be a difficult time for some young people and families. What’s important is to try to keep engaged with some school work, get some exercise and fresh air when you can, and get in touch with us if we can help in any way at all.

Kind regards

Jennifer Wadley

Head Teacher