

Parent Update

29 January 2021



Dear Parents and Carers

Reports

Those of you with a child in S4, 5 or 6 should have received their latest tracking report this week. I hope that you find this useful, particularly in giving you an indication of what your child should now be focusing on to make improvements. Mrs Bleach and Mrs Fleming are in the process of contacting those of you who expressed concerns and I would encourage anyone who has a concern to please get in touch.

Remote Learning

As I mentioned last week, we have used the various evaluations of the digital learning to make some minor changes to the format of the home learning timetable. During the first two weeks of the remote learning period (11 Jan – 22 Jan), the effectiveness of the strategies were considered in the following ways:

- Discussions with staff
- Survey's issued to all students
- Surveys issued to all parents/carers
- Observation of digital lessons
- Discussions with focus groups of students

In the surveys issued 484 student responses were received and 259 parent/carer responses.

Student and parent/carer surveys received so far indicate that around 75% of S1 and S2 students feel they have the correct volume of work. However, the number of students who feel they are being given too much work increases further up the school to 33% of S3, 35% of S4 and 48% of S5. This falls back for S6 to 22%. In all year groups, the vast majority of students feel that the difficulty level of the work they are being given is appropriate. This was also reflected in the discussions with students. During focus group discussions, students indicated that they felt they did not have enough time to complete tasks in lessons where the teacher was live streaming throughout, whether this was audio or video streaming.

Taken together, the evaluations appear to indicate that there is an imbalance in the current learning provision, with both teachers and S3-S5 students not having enough time to work effectively.

To address this, the S1 and S2 classes will continue to work in much the same way as they have been for the past three weeks whilst S3-S6 will have a period from each of their subjects every week allocated to independent study. During this period, the class teacher will not be interacting in a live lesson and students should use that period to work on the assignments/tasks that have been set in previous lessons or, if they have completed these, work on the action points they received from their

recent feedback. They are of course still able to post questions to their teacher but they may not receive a response straight away. Teachers will let their classes know via Teams next week which periods they will have live lessons and which will be independent study.

We will continue to evaluate this model over the next few weeks.

The S5/6 parents' evening will be held virtually on Thursday 4th February and parents/carers of S5/6 students should have received information earlier this week on how to access this. If you have not and would like an appointment, please contact the school office (01506 282155). The S4 parents' evening will take place on Tuesday 9th February and S2 on the Thursday 18 February. Information on these will be issued in due course.

Course Choice

Course choice normally takes place throughout February and whilst this will still be the case this year, we have had to make some changes to how we give information to yourselves and students as well as how we gather student choices in. Mrs Fleming will speak to students at their assemblies next week about the process and let them know where to access the forms and booklets. She will then send parents/carers a link to a powerpoint which gives more information. This will include a link to access a live Skype session (Wednesday 3rd February from 11.30 am – 12.30 pm and from 4 pm to 5 pm) where you will have the opportunity to ask questions around any aspects of course choice. As always, please do get in touch with us if you have any difficulties accessing this or would like to discuss any of it.

SQA

This week SQA gave further updates around maximising learning and teaching time during the current lockdown rather than gathering evidence and I have attached the parent/carer update for your information. I am acutely aware of how anxious many of you and our students are feeling about the assessment process this year and would like to assure you that we are very much focused on following the guidance set out by the SQA and doing what's best for our students. It was always our intention to hold further assessments later in the session and whilst we cannot say when that will be as we do not know when students will be able to return to school, we will ensure that our students are as prepared as possible and have as much advance notice as we can give them.

Pauline Allison
Head Teacher

Reminder of Covid 19 Protocols

As you are aware, with the return of our pupils and staff to school, we have put procedures in to place that support all members of the school community if anyone displays symptoms of Covid 19.

A reminder that the symptoms are:

- High temperature or fever
- A new continuous cough
- A loss of, or change in sense of smell or taste

If a pupil displays symptoms, we will contact you to collect your child (please ensure that we have your most up to date contact details). **Pupils over the age of 16 may return home themselves.** The pupil should, if possible, wear a face covering en route and avoid public transport.

You will be asked to follow Test and Protect and we will provide you with a copy of the Test and Protect Leaflet and Step by Step Guide when your child is collected.

Information on the groups of children within the school, **and on school transport**, and the adults that each group of children come in to contact with will be collected. This is to fulfil legal responsibilities for public health and will allow Test and Protect to contact appropriate people in the event of a positive test result.

If anyone within your household tests positive for Covid 19, please do not send your child to school. Report their absence and the reason for this by calling PSA in the morning.