

20 April 2020

Dear parent/carer,

I hope this letter finds you all well and that you have managed to enjoy some of the good weather on your daily walk over the Easter period. Last term saw some of the most challenging weeks many of us have faced, both personally and professionally and saw a pace of change greater than anything we've experienced before. The rate at which pupils, teachers and parents have switched to a predominantly online, home learning environment has been commendable. We fully understand however that some children may struggle to have a quiet space at home to study with many parents also trying to work from home and other siblings needing support as well.

We are aware that we do not always have all the answers to questions pupils are asking but we are working hard to ensure they are kept informed of relevant information. Whilst we know that there are no SQA exams and that collection of pupil work for Higher and Advanced Higher is no longer happening, the message for all senior pupils remains the same and that is they are encouraged to complete coursework. Not only will this give them the sense of completion and achievement, it will ensure they have covered the full course to allow for the relevant progression – be that employment, college, university or the next year/level in school. The expectation of all pupils is to continue to work on the tasks set and submit them as per instructed by teachers. All subjects are important, but pupils should ensure there is a continued focus on the core subjects such as English and Maths; work has been set for these subjects with submission dates – any support you can give your child to ensure they hand in their work would be much appreciated. S3 pupils in particular should be continuing to complete the work given as their progression in to S4 and National levels is an important time and we need to ensure that with their efforts we get that progression right for them. Work will continue to be set next term and staff have been asked to ensure that an indication as to how much time should be spent on the task is given along with how and when it should be submitted. This will hopefully help pupils begin to find a routine and manage their time according to their own home situation. Teachers are aware of online connectivity issues due to so many people being logged in at the same time and are sympathetic to the challenges this creates. We know of some great examples where pupils are supporting each other via social media – super teamwork in times of need.

Now more than ever is an important time to think of our school values:

Learn & Improve: There's no denying we have all learned and improved our ICT skills recently but don't forget that this value does not just apply to school work but to the wider aspect of those skills for life – help make dinner, have a conversation with family, manage to do more sit-ups with Joe Wicks than when you first began!

Respect all: I am sure you have all been humbled by acts of kindness seen in the media and our own community and how we can all be respectful of others – long may this continue.

Think of the Consequences: As hard as it is to be inside for so long, we must adhere to the Government messages. #StayHomeSaveLives

Get Involved: Get involved in the National message and keep washing those hands. Perhaps you can get involved with family that you don't live with and video-call them to read your little cousin a story? You could even consider getting involved in CLAN's Sunday Sofa Quiz online at 8pm!

As this fourth and final term begins, we would like to thank the pupils for their continued patience with digital platforms, the staff for their efforts to ensure learning can continue and parents for their support. #proudforthy

Best wishes and stay safe,

Portlethen Senior Management Team

Mr Morrison, Mr Cowie, Mr Liversedge and Mrs Campbell-Robertson