21 April 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

**Welcome Back**

Our new term begins today, and I sincerely hope that your circumstances allowed you and your family to spend some time relaxing during the school holidays. There has been speculation in the press over the past few days that schools would be opening next month. However today John Swinney the Deputy First Minister confirmed that schools “*will remain closed for the foreseeable future, which is expected to be until at least the summer break is over*”. It is reassuring to have this clear statement which provides a framework for us all. Our priorities, as a school over this term will be as follows:

**SQA**

To ensure we send appropriate and accurate estimates to the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) for all the young people who have undertaken SQA courses this session. I will post a separate letter detailing how this will be done.

**On-line Learning**

Secondly, we will be continuing to support our young people with their on-line learning and later this week will be issuing a short questionnaire to get your feedback on this. As I said at the end of last term this work is not optional – particularly considering the statement made today by John Swinney indicating that this will be the only educational input young people can access until August at the earliest. If there are issues which we can help with such as access to devices, please let us know and we will do what we can. Teachers will continue to post useful links to sources of help for families.

We are also exploring the safe use of Google Meet to deliver more live or recorded lessons, but you will be aware that our teachers have not been trained in the use of many of the tools required to facilitate a more interactive approach to online learning. In addition, we need to ensure that our young people follow a set of guidelines and that everyone behaves appropriately within this new environment.

I will be discussing the use of Google Meet and our approach to online learning with teaching staff this next week. Following this, our aim is to issue a set of pupil and parental protocols to guide the effective use of platforms such as Google Classroom and Google Meet.

In the meantime, as I said previously, please continue to work with your child on establishing a routine for the new term and requirement of pupils is that they follow the advice of their class teachers and complete the learning activities set. If your child is unwell and unable to participate in home learning, please email their name and class to us using bridgeofdon@aberdeencity.gov.uk.

**School Trips and Events**

We are aware that families who have booked and paid for school trips will be concerned about how refunds for these will be made. Aberdeen City staff continue to work with providers and there will be a statement later this week on our next steps. This applies to all trips foreign and domestic.

The School Ball was cancelled before we went into lockdown, however we continue to consider ways that we can mark our senior pupils’ leaving. Sadly you will not be surprised to learn that all events planned for the summer term will not now go ahead; this includes the Summer Festival, The Awards Ceremony and the School Show.

**Health and Wellbeing**

I do appreciate that these unprecedented circumstances create additional pressures especially for those of you who are key workers or have been self-isolating or caring for family members who need extra help. I also understand that for some there is still a great deal of concern about jobs, income and of course mental and physical wellbeing. This will put limits on what you can do to support your children’s learning on line which we understand. We will continue to signpost sources of help and can be contacted through the school email address above or through a schools’ helpline which has been established to support children and families in need of assistance. The number is 01224 523322. This link may also be useful and answer other questions. <https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/coronavirus-covid-19/schools>

With kindest regards



Daphne McWilliam

Head Teacher