



BRIDGE OF DON ACADEMY

Be Caring Be Honest Be Respectful Be Your Best

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Head Teacher: Daphne McWilliam



Dear Parent/Carer

Head Teacher's Letter – 7 May 2020

As you are aware from my previous letter, new courses begin on Monday. For most pupils, they will be embarking on the courses they chose during course choice procedures in February. For a few pupils, however, they will need to make some changes which will be communicated to them by their Guidance Teacher. Contact has already been made this week with some pupils to discuss options where first choices are not possible and these will continue into next week. It is only fair that time is given to these people to allow changes to be discussed with parents/carers.

There are several reasons why choices may have to be changed and these were pointed out to all pupils at the beginning of the course process in February and at our Careers Evening. It can be due to the low uptake of a subject which then means a course is not viable; it may also be due to a subject being oversubscribed, in which case Principal Teachers, in discussion with their colleagues, will be asked to identify pupils who will need to re-choose.

Staffing capacity is another factor, which means we are unable to offer additional courses and classes without having enough teachers to deliver them. A large intake in S1 will also have an effect on our ability to offer subjects higher up the school.

Once pupils have made changes, for any of the above reasons, their choices are then used to draw up a timetabled column structure, which determines which classes are scheduled when during the school week. It may be at this stage that pupils find two of their subjects are timetabled at the same time. Again, this is a result of the various permutations and combinations of subjects all our pupils have opted for along with the availability of staff. Difficult decisions are taken to minimise the number of pupils who are unable to get their all their choices.

Our timetable normally changes in the first week of June, but although our timetabled column structure will not be finalised by next week due to these ongoing discussions between pupils and staff, pupils should still begin to make progress with their learning in the courses they chose initially. Teachers have been preparing Google Classrooms for the new courses and Classroom codes will be issued to pupils through their Year Group Classrooms over the weekend.

I'm sure you will appreciate that signing up for one of these Classrooms does not mean a pupil has been guaranteed a place in this subject. Access is being given for pupils to make progress with learning, with the hope and likelihood that their first choices have been successful.

The list of codes will also include codes for the City Campus courses which will begin on Monday.

Many of the courses offered by NESCol for next session have been heavily oversubscribed which has delayed confirmation from the College regarding which pupils have been successful given places. We will update pupils as soon as we receive more information.

In addition to these Classrooms, there are other sources of support for young people progressing with National courses and these are detailed below.

SCHOLAR (scholar.hw.ac.uk)

SCHOLAR, run by Heriot-Watt University, is a resource used by many of our teachers to support and consolidate learning in the subjects below:

Science and Mathematics				Languages				Business			
	N5	H	AH		N5	H	AH		N5	H	AH
Biology	✓	✓	✓	English	✓	✓	✓	Accounting		✓	✓
Chemistry	✓	✓	✓	ESOL	✓	✓	**	Art and Design		✓	
Computing Science	✓	✓	✓	French	*	✓	✓	Business Management		✓	✓
Human Biology	**	✓	**	Gaelic	*	✓		Economics		✓	✓
Mathematics	✓	✓	✓	German	*	✓	✓	Psychology		✓	**
Physics	✓	✓	✓	Mandarin	✓						
				Spanish	*	✓	✓				

* Please note: these National 5 courses are support materials only.

** Please note: SQA do not provide a qualification for this subject at this level.

Pupils in S3 moving in to S4 can access the National 5 courses using the username **gesnat5** and the password **bird70pear**

Pupils in S4 will continue to have access to their current courses, should they need, and have been automatically entered by SCHOLAR into the next level, for example, promoted to Higher from National 5. Their existing username and password can be used. Pupils can contact their subject teachers for their login details if they can't remember.

OpenLearn (www.open.edu/openlearn)

OpenLearn has over 1000 free courses under the following headings:

- Health, Sports & Psychology
- Education & Development
- History & The Art
- Languages
- Money & Business
- Nature & Environment
- Science, Maths & Technology
- Society, Politics & Law

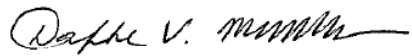
The courses have been proven to increase confidence and develop the skills needed to enter Higher Education and succeed with learning. Some are based on Open University course materials, while others are written specifically for OpenLearn.

There is no minimum age for general use of the site but in order to create an account, users must be aged 13 years or over.

Pupils who have used both resources have spoken highly of the quality of the materials.

As always, I appreciate the support you have been giving your children and their teachers in these difficult and challenging times.

With warmest regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Daphne V. McWilliam', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Daphne McWilliam
Head Teacher