



BRIDGE OF DON ACADEMY

Be Caring Be Honest Be Respectful Be Your Best

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Head Teacher: Daphne McWilliam



12 November 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

Head Teacher's Update – 12 November 2021

I write to update you on the following:

- In-Service Day
- S4 to S6 Online Parents' Evenings
- Safer Schools App – Supporting Parents/Carers in Keeping Their Children Safe Online
- Use of Mobile Technology in School
- Hydrogen School Challenge – Grand Final Glasgow
- Acrylic Nail Extensions
- Aberdeen Endowment Trust – Bursaries
- School Photographs
- CFINE Food Bank Collection
- Pathway Planning
- Covid-19 Guidance for Parents and Carers

In-Service Day

The school will be closed to pupils on Friday 19 November 2021 for the November In-service day.

S4 to S6 Online Parents' Evenings

Our second evening for S4 to S6 parents/carers will be on Thursday 18 November from 4.45pm until 7.30pm. You should have all the information you need from documents previously sent home.

On the evening itself, after logging in, parents/carers will see a list of their appointments and a link to click which will automatically start a video call with each of their child's teachers. The call will end after five minutes and the next one will begin right away.

Normally our Heads of House offer a "drop-in" service at each of our Parents' Evenings which allows you to decide whether you wish to see them after you have

met with teachers or beforehand. As we cannot replicate this online, our Heads of House will therefore be available for appointments on Thursday 18 November 2021. However, if there is an issue relating to your young person's progress that you would like to discuss further, please contact their Head of House by telephone or using the Bridge of Don Academy e-mail address.

Early Feedback

Feedback from teachers and parents/carers was very positive. Parents commented on not having to move between rooms; conversations being more private; meeting with their child's teachers and not have to travel or make childcare arrangements; being able to take part in the parents' evening despite working away from home.

Some noted that they missed the personal element of being able to meet face to face and others expressed frustration at not being able to connect.

Issues with Apple Devices

There were technical issues for families which may have been caused by an update from Apple to their operating system for iPads and iPhones. After contacting the Parents' Evening company about these issues, we received the following information:

"We have learned in the last 48 hours that Apple have introduced a bug into their newest software version, iOS 15.1, which causes the video meetings in Parents Booking (and many, many other websites) not to connect. We had no advance notice about this bug and have only learned about it through use by parents and teachers over the last two days.

At present we're being told that Apple will have fixed this bug in their next software release, which will be iOS 15.2. However, it seems it may be a few weeks before this software update is released. As such, in the meantime, please ask all teachers to check that any Apple devices (iPads/iPhones) they intend to use for video meetings in Parents Bookings are not updated to iOS 15.1.

Older iOS versions, including 15.0, 15.01, 15.02 and anything older (e.g. iOS 12, 13 or 14) will work as expected. The issue is only with devices updated to iOS 15.1, which was released 15 days ago.

We have added a message to parent and teacher's web pages, so that when you arrive for your video meetings you're told about this issue and to use a device that is not updated to iOS 15.1."

Note that Android or Windows devices should continue to work normally.

Rebooking Appointments

If you were affected by the issues described above and missed some or all of your appointments, you can still log into the system to rebook appointments with teachers for Thursday 18 November where there is still availability. Instructions on how to book appointments were sent by Groupcall on Tuesday 2 November but please contact the school office if you would like these to be sent again.

Safer Schools App – Supporting Parents/Carers in Keeping Their Children Safe Online

We have been rolling out the use of the free Safer Schools App to our pupils, staff and parents. We would urge all our parents to install the app which is free to all schools in Aberdeen City.

More information including a link to download the app for is available here:

<https://oursaferschools.co.uk/>

There are different codes for each group to ensure relevant information is given to the appropriate audience:

Parent/Carers:	7675
S1/S2:	3447
S3/S4:	4898
S5/S6:	1544

The app enables us to communicate information to parents by linking to the school news pages and allows us to send push notifications and set up various groups, for example, school transport or a club. Note, however, it does not allow us to send personal communication as individual pupils, parents and staff are not given to the company. It also contains lots of useful information for parents/carers on keeping your child(ren) safe online.

Further information on the internet and internet safety can be found at:

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/>

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/social-media-guides>

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/a-z-guide/social-media/>

<https://www.childnet.com/resources/young-people-and-social-networking-services>

Use of Mobile Technology in School

We have a very simple and straightforward mobile phone policy which is in our prospectus and an extract is reproduced below:

- Pupils are permitted to use mobile technology in the school canteen and school grounds before school, during interval and lunchtime only. These areas are denoted by **green** signs.
- The use of mobile devices is not permitted in any teaching area of the school unless there has been specific permission granted by the class teacher for specific educational purposes e.g., Google Translate, recording speaking assessments, using stopwatch facilities. These areas are indicated by **orange** signs and we trust pupils to use their devices appropriately.
- When moving around the school all earphones should be removed and out of sight. All phones should be in bags or pockets all cables/ headphones should be always out of sight. This is a health and safety matter when moving around

the building as pupils cannot hear as well with earphones in. Areas where the use of a mobile device is denoted by **red** signs.

- Inappropriate use of mobile phone technology in any area of the school building or its grounds is not permitted. **For example: taking photographs, videos or cyber-bullying.**

Hydrogen School Challenge – Grand Final Glasgow

Read more [here](#) about the team which represented Bridge of Don Academy at the Grand Final of the Schools' Hydrogen Challenge competition. The team from Bridge of Don Academy along with teams from Cults Academy and Bucksburn Academy represented their schools and the city at the prelude to the UN Climate Change Conference (Cop26) in Glasgow on 30 October 2021. They were all a credit to themselves, their schools and the city.

Acrylic Nails in Technologies Faculty

There continues to be concern about the number of pupils who are attending school wearing acrylic nail extensions. Acrylic nail extensions are inappropriate for school and a Health and Safety issue for practical subjects. Due to the length and shape of their nails some students are unable to fully access the curriculum. They make using the tools and machinery in Design and Technology dangerous and obstruct their use of IT equipment.

Therefore, since the summer holidays, students are no longer allowed to wear acrylic nails or nail extensions in their Technologies classes. We would greatly appreciate your support in ensuring students do not wear these during the school term. Pupils should ensure their nails are a sensible length that will not affect their participation in the curriculum. Any pupils who arrive to class with these nails will not be able to take part in practical elements of the course and will be given theory work to complete instead.

Aberdeen Endowment Trust – Bursaries

A bursary is available to low-income families with a child attending secondary school from S1 to S4 and is normally awarded as £100 per year. It can be applied for at any time from S1 to S4 but cannot be granted retrospectively. This may be of benefit to families. More information can be found [here](#). The form to complete can be emailed to you. Please contact the school office if you require a form. It should then be completed and returned either by e-mail to aet1909@btinternet.com or by post to the address below.

19 Albert Street
Aberdeen
AB25 1QF

School Photographs

Individual and family portrait photographs will be taken in school on Friday 26 November 2021. Class photographs will be taken either later this term or in the New Year.

CFINE Food Bank Collection

Once again, we will be collecting non-perishable food and essential items for CFINE. To find out more use this [link](#). The next collection date from the school is Thursday 18 November 2021, the day before the In-service Day.

<i>Yes please</i>	<i>No thank you</i>
Tinned Food Cereals Pasta Condiments and spices Juices Toiletries Nappies	Fresh Food Frozen Items Refrigerated Items



Collection points are located throughout the school as follows:

Assembly Room,
Home Economics classroom,
G17 (Miss Strachan's room),
F12 (Miss Devlin's room),
Staff Room
T3 (Mrs Lees' room).

Pathway Planning - Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) Opportunities

DYW opportunities are regularly available on Google Classroom and the school website for young people to see. This week the following have been posted:

- Fusion Dance Company
- Mock Interviews for Medicine
- Uptree/KPMG Online Event

In addition, there is an opt-in session being delivered by Morrison Construction on Tuesday 16 November during period 4. Pupils will be encouraged to sign up for the event if they would like to hear more about the construction industries and the opportunities available to them.

Further DYW opportunities can be found using the following link -

<https://bridgeofdon.aberdeen.sch.uk/wp/?p=8339>

Event for Parents - Is Your Young Person A School Leaver?

As part of Scottish Careers Week, parents and carers can find how they can support their young person make career decisions and move on from school by joining Skills Development Scotland's webinar on Wednesday 17th November, from 6.30pm – 7.15pm. Details [here](#).

Covid-19 Guidance for Parents and Carers

- Procedure if a young person becomes ill during the school day
- Advice for families following a case of Covid-19 in their child's year group
- Lateral Flow Testing

Information on all the above is now located on the school website [here](#).

Contact with School

When e-mailing please provide your child's name and registration class and a note of the nature of the concern so it can be forwarded appropriately.

Pastoral Care

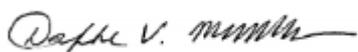
Braemar House: Miss Howard
Crathes House: Mrs Napier
Drum House: Miss Smith
Fyvie House: Mrs Marshall

Year Heads

S1 and S2: Mr Haggarty
S3 and S4: Mrs Cruickshank
S5 and S6: Mr Jamieson

I know that times continue to be challenging for many of you and would encourage you to contact us here at school if you think we can help.

Yours sincerely



Mrs D McWilliam
Head Teacher