



# BRIDGE OF DON ACADEMY

*Be Caring Be Honest Be Respectful Be Your Best*

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**Head Teacher: Daphne McWilliam**



7 December 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

## Head Teacher's End of Term Update – Friday 18 December 2020

I write this week to update you on the following issues.

- School Holidays and End of Term
- Level Three: information for families
- Litter
- New Head of Drum House
- S4 - S6 Assessment period, 11- 29 January 2020
- Course choice procedures 2021
- S2 Reports

### Coronavirus (Covid-19): Local Protection Level 3

As you will be aware Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire have been moved from Level 2 to Level 3. This takes effect from 18.00 on Friday 18th December and so does not impact on school until we return in January. For schools **this means that all staff and young people must wear a face covering in the senior phase (S4 – S6) classrooms.** In addition, as required by Scottish Government guidance, a review of the movement of young people around the city, for example those attending NESCOL, will be undertaken.

More information about the other implications of this for all of us can be accessed by using the link below.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-protection-levels/pages/protection-level-3/>

### Head of Drum House

Following interviews which took place in November we will welcome Miss Ola Smith to Bridge of Don Academy to take over the leadership of Drum House. She will work with Miss Howard, for a period of hand over, who will continue to work with senior pupils to support course choice between January and March. The next few weeks will see us discuss and implement plans for a fourth House as our school roll continues to rise and overtake the threshold required for a fourth Head of House to be appointed.

### Litter

There was a brief improvement in the amount of litter being dropped in the community following my last communication with you on this matter but there has

been an increase in these last two weeks of term. This has been reported to me by members of the public who live Bridge of Don. I know there is a shortage of bins on the routes to and from the local shops and that is something I will raise with local councillors. However, what is more disappointing is that our school janitors have also reported an increase in litter on school grounds. After each break and lunch, they do a litter pick on school grounds and this is taking much longer to carry out as the quantity of litter is much greater. I do not need to labour the impact of this on the presence of gulls, rats and mice, and the negative impact on the image of the school and the appearance of our school grounds.

### **SQA Assessment Period – reminder**

Parents and Carers of pupils in S5 and S6 will be aware, following my communication of last week, that the Higher and Advanced Higher exams have been cancelled. We are now planning our approach to assessing these courses and will be working across Aberdeen City Council.

Our approach to assessment has been planned to:

- ensure that robust evidence-based judgements are made on pupil progress and attainment
- deliver a fair assessment of each pupil's attainment and to ensure that no pupil is disadvantaged
- evidence pupils' progress throughout each national qualification course
- capture pupils' attainment which reflects breadth and depth of knowledge
- provide assessment evidence which stands up to external scrutiny by the SQA

Ongoing assessment will take place in subject classes throughout the session. Evidence will be generated by:

1. **Timed class assessments** which consolidate pupils' knowledge and understanding of a particular topic/unit and/or which assess progress in skills over time.
2. **Assessments** which replicate, as far as possible, "the standard, duration, format and security of SQA question papers." **SQA Guidance on Gathering Key Evidence.** These assessments will reflect the breadth and depth of the course and allow pupils the opportunity to apply their skills, knowledge and understanding in an **unseen** situation. The first of these assessments will take place as follows: some assessments will take place in **Assessment Weeks** as indicated below. There will be no study leave. Teachers will not issue homework during these weeks.

<b>ASSESSMENTS</b>	<b>DATES</b>
National 5/Higher/Advanced Higher	Monday 11 January to Friday 29 January, inclusive

There will be a further assessment period for National 5 Higher and Advanced Higher which will be planned when we have further information from the SQA.

These assessments will be conducted during class time, following SQA examination procedures. For example: pupils will not be allowed mobile phones in the classroom while undertaking an assessment. Again, there will be no study leave.

It is important to note that the SQA have updated schools on the types of key evidence and assessment resources for National 5, and the same information will be issued soon in relation to Higher and Advanced Higher.

For example, for National 5 Music, pupils are expected to be assessed internally with a Question Paper (Listening) and on Performance, but Composition is no longer required. Other subjects, for example, Mathematics, will use internal exams which should “match the course assessment in terms of breadth, depth and challenge” but the SQA go on to say that it “is important to note that it is not the *quantity* of evidence, but the *quality* of evidence, in relation to its predictive value”. They also state “class tests may provide additional useful evidence, but on their own are unlikely to provide the breadth, depth and challenge of the course assessment.”

Each subject has been issued with its own guidance for staff on what they should use to help determine predicted grades.

### **Course Choice**

Pupils in S2 – S5 will begin considering their course choices for 2021 – 22 when we return to school in January. Young people will be given lots of support to do this through the Personal and Social Education period each week with their guidance teacher. There will be further information for families which is specific to each year group from year heads.

### **S2 Reports**

Reports giving information about progress to date and advice on course choice for S3 will be issued on will be issued in the week beginning 11 January 2021. These will help young people and their families as they make decision about what subjects to choose to focus on in S3.

### **Support for Families with Poor Connectivity (Internet Access)**

SHMU has contacted the authority with information to support families without connectivity and facing additional challenges. SHMU has Chromebooks, iPads, and MiFi devices available through Phase 1 of Connecting Scotland. Connecting Scotland Devices Available Before Christmas SHMU has Chromebooks, iPads, and MiFi devices available through Phase 1 of Connecting Scotland that need to be in their new homes by the end of the year.

### **Phase 1 Criteria**

Devices are available for those

- In a low-income household
- Have no internet (broadband or cable) AND/OR no device (they can have a mobile)

- Were previously under the shielding group or have a significant health condition (eligible for flu jab and pregnant included, full list of medical criteria can be provided on request)

If you fit the criteria, please get in touch with Kirsteen at shmu - [kirsteen.caldwell@shmu.org](mailto:kirsteen.caldwell@shmu.org) or 07592064430.

### **Weather Arrangements: A Reminder**

Our staff were reminded last week about the procedures regarding school closure or late starts due to the severe weather. It is extremely rare for the school to be closed, but in the event of severe weather during the night or in the early hours of the morning, the following options are all possible:

- open school one hour later than normal for all pupils and staff;
- open school one hour later than normal for non-bus pupils and staff;
- open school for non-bus pupils and staff;
- close school to all pupils, open to staff;
- close school to all pupils and staff.

A third of our teachers live in outlying areas, up to 30 miles away, and, despite leaving home earlier when there's bad weather, can still be held up due to increased traffic or unsafe road conditions. If we do not have enough staff available to cover classes, the opening may be delayed by one hour to give colleagues the chance to arrive safely to school.

The decision to cancel buses is ultimately down to the transport companies who will assess the risk to pupils and drivers.

If the school is closed, or opens later than normal, we will notify parents via:

- The School Information Line (0870 054 1999, PIN code 011020)
- Aberdeen City Council's School Closures website (<https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/school-closures>)
- School website
- Groupcall

### **End of Term**

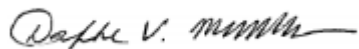
We were not able to have our normal celebrations and events at the end of term but we did have a Christmas Tree in our Foyer and many teachers decorated their classrooms which gave the school a festive feel. The Head Team – four S6 students who have been chosen after votes and interviews to take on leadership roles in school – prepared a splendid digital Christmas Assembly. This was viewed by all pupils in their personal and social education classes this week. It went down very well. My thanks to the Head Team, staff, pupils and the Rev Louis Kinsey from St Columba's Church who all contributed to the production. Christmas lunch went down well in the canteen and young people were asked to wear something sparkly or festive for the last day of term. We have been collecting donations for the local food bank and this will continue after the holidays as the need will continue beyond the festivities.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your support this year. By sending your children to school well rested, well fed and well prepared you are doing your bit to support their education. In addition, by providing them with a supply of face coverings (and spares), reminding them of the need to stay 2 metres away from others out of class and to keep washing/sanitising their hands, you are doing your bit to keep everyone in our community safe. We appreciate your support.

If there is a positive case among staff or pupils which comes to light during the holiday period, Aberdeen City Council officers will do the required investigation to identify close contacts that is normally undertaken by me and the Senior Leadership Team.

The new term begins on Tuesday 5 January at the normal times. I sincerely hope that you all have a restful break and that, if you choose to, you are able to spend time with family as far as the restrictions allow.

Yours sincerely

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

Mrs D McWilliam  
Head Teacher