



BRIDGE OF DON ACADEMY

Be Caring Be Honest Be Respectful Be Your Best

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Head Teacher: Daphne McWilliam



18 February 2022

Dear Parent/Carer

Head Teacher's Update – 18 February 2022

I write to update you on the following:

- Calendar Dates
- Wellbeing
- S3 Parents' Evening: Wednesday 23 February 2022
- S4 – S6 SQA Exams: Timetable and Study Leave
- Course Choice Procedures
- School Reports
- Pathway Planning – Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) Opportunities
- Severe Weather
- Contact with School

Calendar Dates

Last Day of Term	Friday 1 April 2022
First Day of Summer Term:	Monday 18 April 2022
First Day of Study Leave	Tuesday 26 April 2022
First SQA Exams for our pupils	Wednesday 27 April 2022
May Day Holiday:	Monday 2 May 2022
In-Service Day:	Tuesday 3 May 2022
Queen's Platinum Jubilee:	Friday 3 June 2022
New Timetable	Monday 6 June 2022
Last Day of Term:	Friday 1 July 2022

I hope the half term holiday was a good opportunity for young people to recharge their batteries. It is not a long break, but I am sure it is welcome in the longest term of the session. On the In-service Days teachers focussed on moderation of the National Qualifications by working with colleagues across the city. This is an important part of our Quality Assurance procedures to ensure that the correct standards are being applied across all our city schools when making judgements about young people's attainment in their National Qualification courses.

Wellbeing

It is hard to believe it is almost two years since we entered lockdown: working and learning from home and a world dominated by bulletins full of Covid-19 statistics, mitigations and restrictions impacting on all aspects of our lives and very real fears about the health and wellbeing of those we love. For some we are all too aware that life has been changed forever by this pandemic and it continues to impact on the wellbeing of individuals and families in different ways. Fortunately, we seem to be entering a phase where our minds and energy can now turn to planning for the long term rather than just focussing on the next announcement of change from the Scottish Government, local authority or the SQA.

As you will know from previous communications the local authority is gathering the views of young people about their own wellbeing in its broadest sense. Their views will be gathered using questionnaires and we will be able to share the results with you, staff, and the young people next term. Following discussions through PSE lessons and focus groups we will then be able to plan together – teachers, pupils, and parents/carers how best to support their learning and wellbeing as we move into next session – and what we need to prioritise.

Your views on how we can collectively support our young people's wellbeing are vital as we begin this planning process. The first step will be for me to raise this at the next Parent Council meeting which takes place on **Tuesday 22 February at 19.30** through Microsoft Teams. I will be looking for the Parent Council members to share with me their views and then we need to plan together how together how to gather the ideas and views of the wider parent/carer body.

Anyone who wishes to join the PC for this, or any future meeting can do so by sending an email to bridgeofdon@aberdeencity.gov.uk with your name and the name and class of your child(ren) and an email address and I will issue the invite to the remote meeting

S3 Parents' Evening: Wednesday 23 February 2022

Parents' Evenings for session 2021/2022 will be held online using the same software which has been used by parents and staff in previous years when making appointments. A video calling module is now built into the software which allows meetings to take place within the browser.

For parents who are unfamiliar with the system, a letter and instructions were issued to parents on Thursday this week. The system was opened up at 7pm that evening for parents/carers to schedule appointments with their child's teachers.

On the evening itself, once logged in, parents 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 a few seconds later.

Times will be available from 4.45pm until 7.30pm, with a 15-minute comfort break at 6.00pm.

S4 – S6 SQA Exams: Timetable and Study Leave

The SQA Exam Timetable can be accessed [here](#). On this page there is also a link for young people to create their own individual timetable.

Please note that schools can alter the start times of exams by up to 30 minutes to allow for local circumstances so young people should not use the times of the exams as published on the SQA website. All young people will be issued with a personalised exam timetable detailing the times (for this school) as well as the room number and seat number for each of the exams they are sitting at an assembly led by Mr Jamieson. They will be given time to check this which will also include the name to go on their certificate and the address to which their certificate will be sent. Any errors must be brought to our attention so they can be changed.

Young people can also sign up to have their results sent by text message or by email. Young people must sign up to MySQA for this service and can do that [here](#).

Study leave is for all S4 – S6 young people and will begin on Tuesday 26 April 2022. Therefore, their last day in school will be Monday 25 April.

Course Choice Procedures

Course Choice procedures are well under way for the current S2 to S5 Pupils. Information was issued in previous Head Teacher update letters issued Friday 21 and 28 January and can be read on the school website [here](#).

The Course Choice booklet and the presentations which were made to all young people in Personal and Social Education (PSE) lessons are available on the school website using this [link](#).

All additional resources to support young people in making the appropriate choices are available on Google Classroom and by using the following links below.

[S2 into S3 Course Choice](#)

[S3 into S4 Course Choice](#)

[S4/5 into S5/6 Course Choice](#)

Mrs Cruickshank has also added the NESCOL Course Choice booklet to these posts which contains the courses available for pupils in S4 – S6 still attending school.

Deadlines for returning course choice forms:

S2 into S3: Thursday 10 February

S3 into S4: Friday 25 February

S4/5 into S5/6: Friday 25 February

School Reports

The school's calendar for reporting and parents' evenings can be downloaded from the school website [here](#).

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:

- OGTAP Technical Apprentice Programme
- Linklaters Making Links Schools Challenge
- Audit Apprentices in Aberdeen

Lots more DYW opportunities can be found [here](#).

Severe Weather

My thanks to staff, families, and young people for the quick and efficient way they responded to the need to close the school early on Friday 18 February 2022. This was because of the road conditions in outlying areas and the need to ensure all pupils and staff could get home safely. Although conditions in Bridge of Don did not deteriorate as much as in other parts of the city and outlying areas our assessment of the situation was that travel conditions were such that there could have been significant delays and safety concerns for pupil and staff journeys home if we had not closed early.

We have in place policies to ensure learning can continue when we have periods of bad weather.

All classwork and homework are posted on Google Classroom as assignments so parents/carers can see this using Google Guardian. If you need more help with the Google suite of resources, you will find the Google Support site under the *Parents* menu on the front page of the school website. You can also access it using this [link](#).

In severe weather conditions, emergency closure or other emergency circumstances, parents and pupils can receive up-to-date information via:

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

If we have an emergency during the school day and must send young people home early, we will contact parents/carers using Groupcall. Before we send young people home, we ask teachers to check that they have been able to contact home and will be able to get into the house. If any young person has not been able to do this, we ask them to wait in school until we or they have made contact.

We have separate arrangements for our more vulnerable learners who travel to school by taxi whereby one of our support team will telephone parent/carer directly.

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

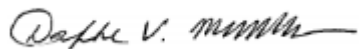
Braemar House: Miss Howard
Crathes House: Mrs Napier
Drum House: Miss Smith
Fyvie House: Mrs Marshall

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

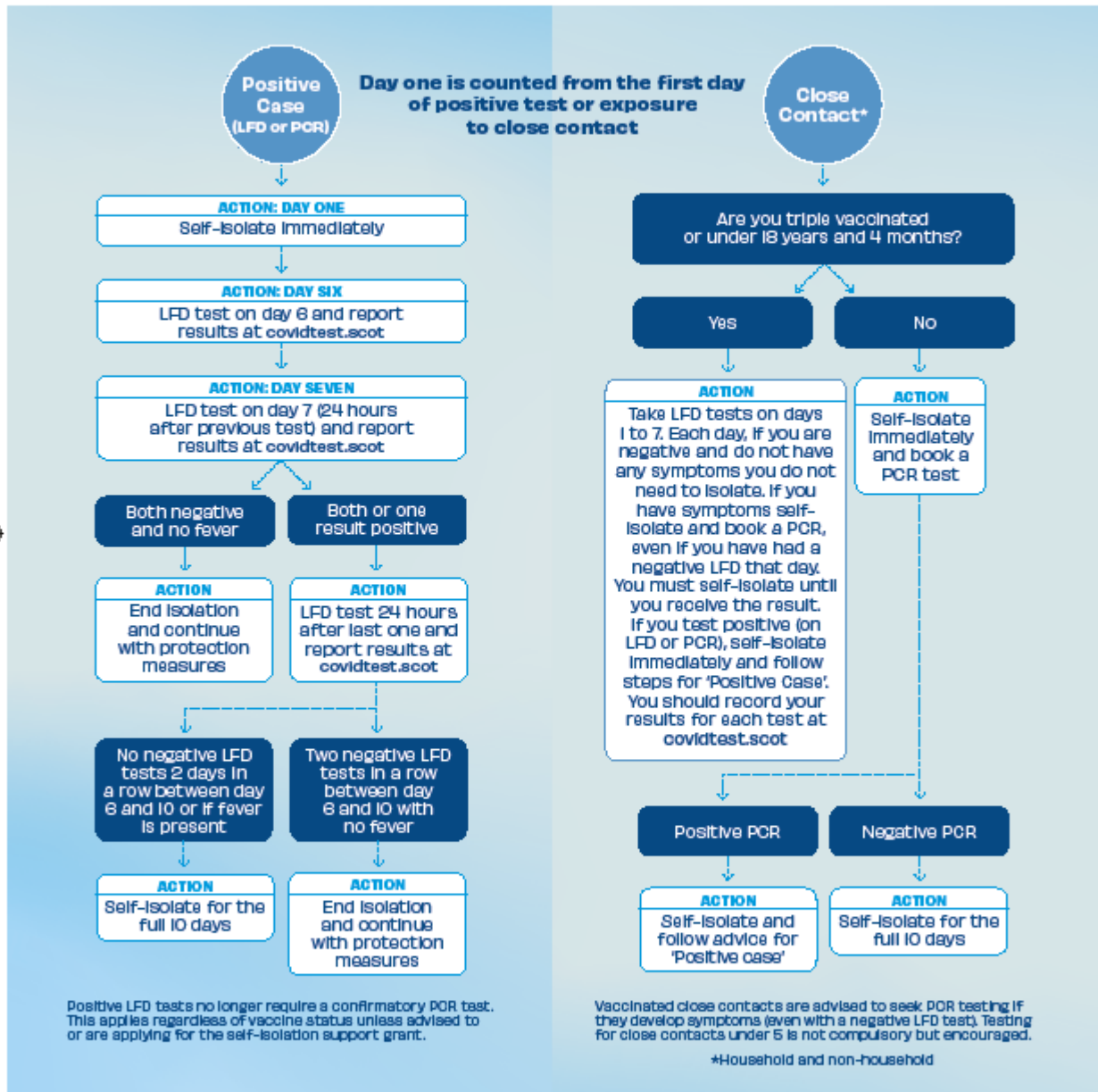


Mrs D McWilliam
Head Teacher



**Living safely
this winter**

Changes to Self-Isolation and Testing



For more details visit NHSinform.scot/isolation

Being fully vaccinated reduces your risk of serious ill-health or hospitalisation from COVID-19 and time in self-isolation if you are a close contact. If you are not fully vaccinated visit NHSinform.scot or call 0800 030 8013 for details on how to get your first or next dose.

