



BRIDGE OF DON ACADEMY

Be Caring Be Honest Be Respectful Be Your Best

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Head Teacher: Daphne McWilliam



22 January 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Head Teacher's Update – Friday 22 January 2021

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

- Extension of school closure
- Google Meets
- Library resources and support
- S2 Reports and Course Choice
- Live n Learn Virtual Sessions for all pupils in S1- S6

Extension of School Closure

The First Minister announced on Tuesday of this week that schools will remain closed until at least the middle of February with a review on 2 February. At this point we can perhaps expect some more information about how a phased return to school buildings is being planned. In the meantime, we will continue to provide remote learning for all young people at home and those in school who are vulnerable learners or the children of key workers.

For young people in S1- S3 a range of work is being set by teachers providing a balance between live learning and independent activity. This will include independent learning tasks; Google Meets for teacher explanations and drop-ins or Q and A; direction to online resource to support learning; pre-recorded lessons/explanations which can be accessed when required and the chance to ask/pose questions through email or Google Classroom. We know that remote learning is not a substitute for full time classroom-based learning and teaching. However, young people should continue to engage with the work and tasks provided to minimise the impact of the school's closure on their progress. All of the work being provide should be accessible to young people regardless of their home circumstances and the approach they are taking to their remote learning.

The emphasis for young people in S4 to S6 continues to be learning and teaching of course content and skills in preparation for assessment – as described above. Therefore it is vital that young people engage fully with the work being provided and comply with deadlines for work to be submitted. Engagement is important because when we return to school the focus will be on building on the work done during the period of remote learning and not on revisiting work covered during lockdown. All young people in S4- 6 should by now have their own Chromebook which will support

this. If there is a specific issue proving a barrier to engagement for any young person please contact us in school so we can discuss how they can be supported.

Google Meets

We have had two communications from families asking if teachers could arrange Google Meets using the calendar facility in the Google Suite for Education. This is a reasonable suggestion which we have discussed at some length. However, it requires teachers to input the individual email addresses of each young person for each Google Meet which is not an efficient use of time particularly when a teacher teaches a whole year group of young people and it involves creating a new code for each meet. Unfortunately, it can also involve the wrong pupil being invited to the meet when there two pupils with the same name in Aberdeen City schools. Finally, there is no facility to create a group email within the Google Suite for Education.

All Google Meets will take place at the time when pupils are timetabled for that subject. Pupils will be told by their teacher when the meet is taking place through Google Classroom. If teachers have posted the meeting as an assignment it will automatically appear in the pupil's calendar. All teachers have been advised that this is the preferred option. It remains a pupil's responsibility to know about and turn up for the meet.

School Library support for pupils

During school closure the Library will support pupils using our Google Classroom (code **cviklhw**). We will post regularly, providing updated information on reading for pleasure including book recommendations and suggesting resources for home learning. We will set a few fun activities too. We are also continuing to run our Reading Challenge where we are attempting to travel the world via *reading miles*. Further book recommendations, BODA book lists and more detailed information is to be found on our Library website <https://sites.google.com/ab-ed.org/bodalibrary/home>

If pupils are looking for reliable up-to-date sources on current, social and moral issues for projects or persuasive/discursive essays they can access these library resources from home

www.issuesonline.co.uk

Username: Bridge of Don Password: 18368

www.completeissues.co.uk

Username: boda

Password: general

Accessing books, e-books and audio books

Aberdeen city Libraries and Aberdeenshire Libraries provide a great range of free e-books, e-comics and audio books for teens and young adults. You do have to be a member but joining is easily done online. Pupils under 16 will need a parent or guardian as guarantor.

<https://aberdeencity.spydus.co.uk/cgi-bin/spydus.exe/MSGTRN/WPAC/JOIN>

<https://www.livelifeberdeenshire.org.uk/libraries/become-a-member/>

If your child prefers an actual book, Aberdeen City are operating a click and collect service. Details can be found on the website.

Audio books are also available to stream free from *Audible*

<https://stories.audible.com/start-listen>

Individual authors are also to be found on You Tube and Instagram reading their own books and on their own websites for example Neil Gaiman at

<https://www.mousecircus.com/>

S2 Reports and Course Choice

S2 reports were posted home on Monday and so should be with you now. If not please contact the school to let us know. The reports have information about pupil progress and next steps which will be useful to inform decisions about course choices for S3. This week in PSE young people have been familiarising themselves with My World of Work and have been asked to register. This is an online platform with access to resources which helps young people to shape their ideas and supports planning for pathways and future careers.

<https://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/>

Live N Learn Virtual Sessions for S1 – S6.

As we work remotely, we have been considering alternative ways to ensure our young people continue to develop skills for life, learning and work. Live N Learn have delivered inspiring workshops to our pupils in school over the past two years. These have been an important means of building confidence, developing resilience, setting aspirations and nurturing positive health and wellbeing.

This year Live N Learn can deliver live workshops remotely in online Google Meet sessions. All pupils from S1 to S6 are invited to participate as part of their PSE curriculum with their Head of House. The workshops will help to cultivate growth mindsets and develop confidence and resilience. The sessions will vary between each year group and have been customised for each age and stage, considering issues relevant to each group.

For S1, the sessions will focus on self-management, positive mental wellbeing, values and kindness.

The S2 – S5 sessions will have subject choice as an underlying theme. S2 pupils will also spend time on promoting positive mental wellbeing. The S3 sessions have been tailored to include content on aspirations, positive attitudes and goal setting. For all pupils in S4 to S6, resilience planning, optimism, goal setting, study time management and marginal gains will all be discussed.

We expect our pupils to gain a great deal from these live and engaging sessions. The content covered will be explored further in PSE as part of our Health and Wellbeing curriculum.

The workshops will take place over a two-week period. Details of your young person's workshop will be posted on their PSE Google Classroom and are listed in the Online Learning Programme.

Contact with School

You can telephone or email the school to let us know of any concerns you have or to alert us to your child not being able to take part in on-line learning due to illness. Please note that the school office is staffed on a minimal basis by rota and that phone calls may not be answered as quickly as normal. When emailing please provide your child's name and registration class and a note of the nature of the concern so it can be appropriately forwarded.

Pastoral Care

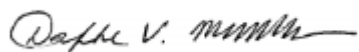
Crathes House	Mrs Napier
Drum House	Miss Smith/Miss Howard
Fyvie House	Mrs Marshall

Year Heads

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

I hope that you all continue to be well and, as always, please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of further support.

Yours sincerely



Mrs D McWilliam
Head Teacher