

Dear Parent/Carer,

As we look forward to the last full working week for our young people, please see a number of updates below:

COVID-19 procedures

Throughout this session, the support of parents/carers and pupils has been crucial in helping to keep the impact of incidences of COVID-19 to a minimum. Like other areas where people gather, such as cafes, restaurants, shops etc, the best way to avoid an incidence of COVID-19 in a school community, is to remain vigilant for symptoms of COVID-19. If any young person has any of the symptoms associated with COVID-19, it is essential they do not attend school. As a reminder NHS define the common symptoms as:

- **a high temperature** – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- **a new, continuous cough** – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- **a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste** – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

If this is the case, get a test to check if you have coronavirus as soon as possible. You and anyone you live with should stay at home and not have visitors until you get your test result – only leave your home to have a test.

I would stress that families in the Braes community have been very strong in following these procedures, and this note is simply a general reminder.

Of course, cases of COVID-19 can still affect people within the local community. When this occurs, it is the strict adherence to our school's procedures that mean we can keep the impact to a minimum. Again, it is pleasing to see that our young people are taking this situation seriously and meeting the expectations set. Part of this is ensuring that face coverings are brought to school. While we will always ensure a young person has a face covering if they do not have on with them, and the vast majority of pupils do bring a covering to school, it would be helpful if we could reduce the number issued each day, even further.

Retirements

At the end of term, Braes High School will say goodbye to three long standing servants to the school. Mrs Dickson, our much appreciated and long serving Teacher of Mathematics, is retiring as of January 2021. Mrs Dickson has contributed a great deal throughout her time at Braes, both in her commitment to pupils, and her contribution to the department as a valued colleague. Mr Stanfield, our IT Technician, is also retiring at the end of term. Mr Stanfield has been a crucial part of our team, supporting many in-school pupil events, and the ongoing development of technology in education across our school. Mr Stanfield has exemplified the work ethic of Braes High School throughout his time here. Finally, we also say goodbye to Mrs Manson, who is well known to parents/carers, pupils and colleagues across the authority for her deep knowledge of our young people, her belief in their potential, and her insistence on high standards in our school. All three of our colleagues will be greatly missed, and we wish them all a very well deserved and happy retirement.

School based Police Officer

As parents/carers may be aware, all secondary schools in Falkirk have an allocated school based police officer. The role of a school based officer is not to 'police' school pupils, but rather to forge positive working relationships between the Police and young people, and to assist and advise families and pupils where required. The officer will also support the curriculum, contributing to lessons across subjects where appropriate. Braes has had a vacancy in this role since September, and this will be filled when PC Ian Bleakley joins the school in the new term. PC Bleakley has worked with young people by leading Police Scotland's Youth Volunteer programme, in which some Braes pupils already participate. It will be good to have PC Bleakley with us in the new term.

Christmas Events

Our Creative Arts faculty have been busy with pupils preparing for an online Art Exhibition and Musical Performances. Further details of when this will go 'live' online will come later this week.

End of term arrangements

Arrangements for the end of term will be issued later this week.

In the meantime, I hope all Braes families are doing as well as possible just now, and we are grateful for your ongoing support.

Yours faithfully,

Iain Livingstone