

Dear Parent/Carer,

Thank you again for your ongoing support of your young person as they make their way through the first term of the new session. Again this week we have seen a positive mind-set among our young people towards dealing with the new expectations and procedures. The term continues apace, and while it is certainly not 'business as usual', we are pleased to be reintroducing in a gradual, staged manner more types of practical learning into the pupil experience, in line with national guidance. It is clear from daily visits to lessons that our young people are responding well to this.

Although our focus has inevitably been on the logistics of a smooth beginning to the new session in terms of the COVID situation, we are clear that this cannot define the school experience of our young people. While I cannot begin to imagine what it must be like to be a teenager growing up in these circumstances, I am acutely aware that we need to make every moment in school count for our young people. This week saw the beginning of assemblies with senior pupils, recognising the task ahead of them in terms of study and National Qualifications, focusing on our oft-repeated mantra to pupils of rigour, aspiration and perseverance. This message will be conveyed to other year groups in House Assemblies taking place in PSE lessons next week. In addition, this week has seen good attendance by pupils at Supported Study sessions. I would encourage young people in S4-6 to liaise with their teachers about these sessions and to attend where they can.

Dealing with the demands of school work and study is of course part of the recovery for young people at this time. However we must recognise the importance of promoting positive mental health among all in our school community, and it was pleasing to see a good online turnout for this week's Mental Health and 'Talk to Me' session with parents/carers. Materials relating to this will be available on our school website. As always, if you have any concerns regarding your young person, please do not hesitate to contact the relevant Pastoral Head.

It was also pleasing this week to see Aidan Wansbrough of S6 be awarded the title of school Dux for session 2019/20. Of course this has been delayed this year, and we look forward to seeing Aidan recognised at an amended Awards Ceremony with fellow pupils during the pupil day in the coming weeks. Our congratulations go to Aidan in achieving this award among a very strong field of candidates.

The School Captain recruitment process is also now underway, and as ever, we have many strong candidates. The bravery and ambition of the pupils in putting themselves forward is appreciated, and it is always a difficult decision to select the final Captaincy team.

Scottish Government Guidance

We are grateful to parents/carers and pupils for following the Scottish Government guidance regarding attendance at school. It is always helpful to have a reminder of these to hand and therefore please see extracts from the Scottish Government guidance below:

- It is essential that people do not attend school if symptomatic. Everyone who develops symptoms of COVID-19 – a new, continuous cough; fever or loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste - should self-isolate straight away, stay at home and arrange a test via the appropriate method.
- Children, young people and staff can book a test through www.nhsinform.scot, the employer referral portal (for staff only – see below) or, if they cannot get online, by calling 0800 028 2816.

- People who live in the same household as a person with symptoms should also self-isolate straight away and stay at home. Only those developing symptoms should be tested. There is no need for other members of the household to have a test, unless they are also symptomatic.
- If the test result for the symptomatic person is negative, and they are not already isolating as a 'close contact' of a confirmed case, they can end isolation and return to work or school when they are well enough and have not had a fever for 48 hours assuming also that they are not quarantining for foreign travel reasons. The rest of their household can end isolation straight away.
- If the test is positive, the symptomatic person must remain in isolation until 10 days from symptom onset, or longer if symptoms persist. They must otherwise be well and remain fever-free for 48 hours without medication. The rest of the household should remain in isolation for 14 days from symptom onset in the symptomatic person, even if they don't have symptoms themselves.
- Everyone who tests positive for COVID-19 will be put in touch with the local contact tracing team so that other close contacts can be identified. All close contacts who are in the same household as confirmed cases will be asked by Test and Protect to self-isolate for 14 days from symptom onset in the symptomatic person.
- Contacts from outside the household of the confirmed case will be asked to self-isolate at home for 14 days from the date of last exposure to the case.
- Everyone who has been asked to self-isolate by Test and Protect as close contacts of confirmed cases must continue to self-isolate for 14 days, even if they have a negative test result.
- Unless otherwise advised by Test and Protect or local Incident Management Teams, where children, young people or staff do not have symptoms but are self-isolating as a close contact of person who is a confirmed case, other people in their household will not be asked to self-isolate along with them.

Parents/carers will be aware that some schools across the country, some within Falkirk Council, had responded quickly to situations where young people have had a confirmed positive case of COVID-19. Should such an eventuality happen in Braes, we will liaise with the Health Protection Team and Children's Services to ensure that all necessary processes are followed.

Finally, I hope everyone has a pleasant weekend when it comes, and that everyone is keeping and coping as well as possible.

Iain Livingstone
Headteacher