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Head Teacher:
Mr R McLaren

18th December 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Headteacher Update

At the end of what has been a busy term, I am keen to write to you to update you on a number of key issues. These include:

- 1. School Assessment Update**
- 2. Pupil return to school**
- 3. Distribution of Chromebooks to pupils**
- 4. Reporting to parents**
- 5. Travel Abroad**

1. School Assessment Update

My colleague Ms McLellan wrote to you earlier this month detailing the changes to our exam arrangements announced by the DFM, Mr J Swinney. This clearly has consequences for us here in school. Over the past number of weeks, as key information has been published by the SQA, we have consulted with staff, pupils and parents. What is clear is that whilst most assessment due to be undertaken in S4 can happen within the extended periods we have as part of class time, we will have to do something slightly different for pupils studying Higher and Advanced Higher.

Consequently, we have planned an assessment week for pupils in S5-6. This will run from Wednesday 18th February to Friday 26th February. This is likely to be the first of two assessment weeks for pupils in S5-6. Initial feedback suggested that pupils would prefer that we allocate study leave. I am currently working with colleagues within Aberdeen City Council to better understand whether this is a decision I can take and specifically if this decision sits within COVID-19 guidance and agreed actions schools can take. I am keen to respond positively to this pupil request.

I attach a copy of our assessment diet, but please appreciate as with all things at the moment, we may require to make changes in line with emerging National advice.

2. Pupil return to school

There is no doubt it has been a challenging year for us all. With news of the relaxation in some of the public rules and regulations around Christmas, I am asking for your support in stressing to our children the importance of adhering to government guidelines, for the sake of themselves, their families and the wider community. In January, we will come back to school ready to meet the challenges of ensuring all pupils are as successful as possible, particularly those undertaking certificate courses. Pupils who are experiencing COVID-19 related symptoms should not return to school in January until a test has been undertaken and it has been determined safe for them to return to school.

3. Distribution of Chromebooks to pupils

Over the past few weeks, we have been issuing Chromebooks to all pupils in Senior school. Several pupils have declined to accept a Chromebook. Whilst I understand many have their own devices at home, please can I stress that when brought into school, personal devices will not work on our wifi network and as such, when teachers begin to use Chromebooks in lessons, I am keen that no pupil be disadvantaged by not having one. I would urge all pupils to accept the offer of a device. We intend to begin distribution of Chromebooks to all pupils in S1-3 in the new term.

4. Reporting to parents

Over the past few weeks, we have engaged with staff, parents and Trade Union representatives to pull together a proposal for how we engage with reporting and parents' evenings. This is very much linked to our recently improved understanding on this year's SQA requirements and our subsequent ability to inform you and your children of progress made.

Please find attached summary of our proposal. I wish to be clear, I consider this to be an ambitious approach but feel this represents the very best offer we can put in place. It is our intention to offer online parents' evening appointments.

6. Travel abroad

Please can I remind you that should you be traveling abroad during this school holiday, please can you ensure you check and follow the most recent advice which can be found here. [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): international travel and quarantine - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/topics/health/coronavirus/covid-19/international-travel-and-quarantine)

Finally, can I please thank you for your continued support. This continues to be a very challenging time for us all. Every day, staff and pupils are giving their very best efforts in school despite the most demanding of circumstances. I appreciate that family life at home also looks very different and so I would wish to recognise the efforts made by you all as well.

I wish you a restful holiday and look forward to welcoming your children back to school on Tuesday 5th January 2021.

Yours sincerely



Mr R McLaren
Head Teacher