



8 January 2021

Dear Parent

I hope you and your family are well and that you have had an enjoyable Christmas and New Year despite the challenges we currently face.

With many of our young people accessing remote learning at home over the next few weeks, I would like to share with you some information that will facilitate a smooth transition to online learning as far as possible. Although Microsoft Teams will be our main platform for learning and teaching, we will share additional tips and resources on our school Facebook page.

We know that these are anxious times for both pupils and parents. Students in the senior phase are no doubt anxious about assessments and we are expecting further guidance at the end of next week which we will share at the earliest opportunity. It is important that senior students engage fully, complete all tasks set on Teams and let staff know if there are any issues. For pupils in the BGE (S1-3) we will set a minimum target for work to be completed but appreciate that all circumstances are different, therefore, pupils should do what they can but try not to worry too much about falling behind if they are finding online learning difficult.

As always, our aim as a school is to provide the best possible education with the skills and resources we have available. We are all trying to do the best we can to support our young people. Most of our teaching staff are working from home with their time allocated to the provision of online learning. A team of school-based support, teaching and senior staff are helping to facilitate this while ensuring provision of care for the children of key workers and support for our cohort of 'vulnerable' pupils.

As you will appreciate, we want to provide the best service we can to ensure everyone's mental and physical health and wellbeing, which must be the main priority. We must be mindful that staff have additional responsibilities at home while some pupils have limited IT access and parents are trying to support home learning while balancing many other demands. We greatly appreciate your patience and understanding during these difficult times.

The following sections detail our plans for remote learning for January.

Issue of student work

All work will be posted on GLOW Teams on a Monday so that families can plan a schedule which suits their own circumstances. In line with local authority recommendations, pupils in S1-3 will receive at least 45 minutes of work per subject per week depending on subject allocation while individual teachers will set work appropriate to the needs of young people. There is a suggested maximum of 2 hours per subject per week and this should be differentiated with extension work as appropriate. Students in the senior phase will receive an average of four hours' worth of work per subject per week, dependent on level of study. For pupils who require paper copies of essential lesson materials, these will be posted out at the end of the week in time for the following week.

The nature of work set

Staff will aim to issue work to match normal learning activities as closely as possible. Teams will be used for the issue, monitoring and return of work. Additionally, there is a plethora of apps and websites offering learning resources and staff may direct pupils to their use. The school website also provides many good links to these. The use of video conferencing may be provided according to certain legal parameters. Additional 'challenges' may be offered at a subject or whole school level which pupils or families can choose to undertake to enhance the learning experience. As always, pupils are expected to assume appropriate responsibility for their own learning.

Support from staff

Pupils can only contact staff using GLOW email. This is to comply with data protection law. A timetable of when staff are available will be sent to parents and pupils and updated when required. It should be noted that some staff are responsible for additional classes due to staffing issues or may be absent from work during this period so may not always be available at the times indicated. Staff may create 'channels' inside class Team pages for pupils to ask questions and offer feedback.

Submission and return of work

Staff will inform pupils of the deadline for work to be submitted (at least one week) and method of submission. If there are problems uploading to the assignment page, then pupils must notify their teacher through their glow email in the first instance. If problems continue then parents can contact the school admin address with the teacher's name in the 'subject' of the email.

Staff will offer feedback normally within two weeks or slightly longer for more detailed projects. The Pupil Support Team, led by Mr Macleod, have created a system for notifying parents of staff concerns with pupils accessing or engaging with online learning. Where a child is unable to complete work, eg for health reasons, then parents should notify their child's guidance teacher by telephoning the school office during the school day or by emailing the admin account at any time.

Students without IT access at home

Principal Teachers of Guidance will co-ordinate the issuing and return of work, with support from our admin team. We will continue to liaise with the local authority to improve access to online learning for those without provision at home and ask parents to notify us if there are any IT issues.

Communication with school

Parents with access to IT should email the admin account with all enquiries and these will be passed to the appropriate Guidance teacher or member of the Senior Leadership Team. In line with our school communication policy, unless it is a Child Protection or other serious matters we will aim to acknowledge parental communication within three working days and respond no later than ten working days (although we normally aim to respond much sooner). Please note that parents cannot use their child's GLOW email to contact staff. This ensures the necessary protection for all parties.

Ongoing evaluation and development

Students, parents and staff will be invited to provide general feedback through surveys.

Confidentiality

It is important to note that Teams is a learning community and as with a classroom environment the privacy of others must be respected. Pupils may download files and save to their own device for ease of access. No materials posted by staff can be copied, shared, redistributed in any way or re-posted online. This is essential to comply with legislation, especially Copyright and GDPR (data protection). Video conferencing must respect GDPR and only participants in the meeting or conference should be present. If others are in the room, this must be made known to all participants. Earphones should be used as an added

protection. Normal school expectations and Moray Council ICT policy both apply to use of GLOW. It must be used appropriately by all users within the bounds of the usual code of conduct. Use of electronic communications systems must result in positive outcomes for other users and within council regulations and the law. Failure by pupils to conduct themselves within these frameworks will result in disciplinary action and removal from GLOW.

I acknowledge that this is a lengthy briefing and that government announcements are expected next week. We will keep you informed of any further changes or requirements. I will try to write to you at the end of each week but may need to send additional communications if there are important updates. Meanwhile, please look after yourselves and remember that we are all trying to get through this unprecedented period in the best way we can.

Please stay safe and well.

Best regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Cameron', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Mrs T Cameron
Head Teacher