Headteacher's Newsletter Friday 19 March 2021

Dear Families

This week has flown by for us all and it was lovely to welcome back our young people to school. The pupils have taken their new routines on board and do their best to follow them. It was particularly challenging for our senior pupils as they are currently on a partial return, but all glad to be back and get into a "normal" routine. The weather has been on our side during the week and this has helped enormously as we are outside during breaks and at lunchtime. Long may that continue. It was a positive message from our First Minister on Tuesday, and we are planning for a full return to school after the Easter holidays. There will be a range of mitigations still in place, including Lateral Flow Testing being offered to all young people in S1-3. Further information and consent forms will follow for all families concerned via Parent Pay.

It is however possible that things might not go entirely to plan and, should that be the case, we will continue with the timetable and arrangements that we currently have in place for Nursery, Primary and Secondary. As you know, all decisions need to be based on data and this means that we may not hear for definite until during the Easter holidays. I will be in contact with you by email during the holidays to confirm our plans if necessary.

Our current plans at school are strict and are in place to minimise risk for our young people, their families and our staff. This has had an impact on The Den and I have message from them below -

The Den at Heartland Kids' Club have been working hard behind the scenes to develop a safe strategy to reopen. All out of hours care providers must adhere to the same bubble principles as the school. For The Den, this means separation of children by class and potentially 8 bubbles to oversee for each Den session. The Den staff would have to be extremely strict in adhering to this policy with each grouping 2m apart. At times, children could end up by themselves as siblings, family and friends would have to remain in their class bubbles. Taking this into account, The Den, in consultation with the school, have made the difficult decision to remain closed until the bubbles within the school expand to P1-P3 and P4-P7 groupings. The Den Committee will review this position regularly and apologise for any inconvenience. They look forward to reopening The Den at the earliest, and safest, opportunity. Please email thedenatheartland@gmail.com if you have any questions.

The Den is seeking storage within our local community. Possibly a large shed or lock up or an area they could site a storage container (like the ones at the rear of the school). If you have anything suitable, please email the Committee directly thedenatheartland@gmail.com

Last week we heard about the adventures of Supertato and the Evil Peas. Primary 2 enjoyed reading the books so much that they have decided to create their own. Each child has designed a front cover, written a resume for the back cover and is using their plan to write their very own Supertato Adventure. The books will be published on Seesaw on Wednesday, 25 March 2021 and I'll make sure we have an example or two for the newsletter next week.

It is a most challenging time for our S4 pupils, and their families and we are working closely with our young people in school and making direct contact with home as necessary.

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Please see the links below to a question and answer session with SQA organised by the National Parent Forum for Scotland.

National Parent Forum of Scotland - Q&A with SQA

Please use the link below to sign up to a Q&A which is being hosted by the National Parent Forum of Scotland and the SQA on exams, assessments, coursework on Thursday 25 March 2021.
https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/x/npfs-sqa-qa-with-parents-tickets-145433257789
I have also included the link to the SQA consultation on the Appeals process and would encourage you to take part in this and make sure that your voices are heard.

SQA Appeals Consultation

The SQA have now launched a consultation on the 2021 appeals process - https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/97103.html.
The consultation can be found here – https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/96506.html and is open until Friday 26 March 2021.

We are planning to run an Easter Study opportunity for S4 in school from Tuesday 6-Friday 9 April, 9am-3pm. There will be a range of subject specific and general study opportunities during this week. Timetable to follow as soon as possible.

Remember that there is a Parent Council meeting on Tuesday 23 March on Teams at 7.00pm and on Tuesday 30 March at 7.00pm we have a presentation for parents by SAMH (Scottish Association for Mental Health) about positive approaches to supporting our children and young people as we move forward. Further information to follow from the Parent Council. Please come along and join us.

Have a lovey weekend.

Take care
Elaine Liney