Headteacher's Newsletter

Dear All,

We are now at the end of our first week of "virtual school" and I wanted to give you an up-date and share progress. I am sure that it has been a challenging week for many of you, but the most important thing is that you and your families are safe and well.

As soon as we were made aware that there was the possibility of closure, we started to plan for maintaining learning and teaching. I am immensely proud of the work that was done by staff and pupils in a short space of time. We have planned a wide range of activities for our pupils and would like to thank you for your continued efforts in supporting learning at home. I know how challenging this can be; especially for those parents who are also trying to work from home themselves. I am sure that, in time, you will find a rhythm for your day that works for your family. There is no doubt that home learning will change over time, so please bear with us as we refine our home learning offer over the coming weeks. It is not clear how long this will last, but rest assured that we are planning for the longer term and are therefore working towards developing rich approaches to learning which include two-way communication between all teachers and pupils, feedback on learning and robust approaches towards assessment.

With large numbers of people working from home, there has been enormous pressure on our online networks during school hours. Please bear with us as we build capacity both in PKC and across the whole country. In the meantime, if have any questions or queries about home learning arrangements, please contact the school office by email pitlochry@pkc.sch.uk and someone will get back to you.

For our S4 pupils and parents, the SQA has announced this week that although it will not be asking schools to submit coursework for Higher or Advanced Higher, they still plan to mark work at National 5 level that has already been submitted. Please be assured that as a school, we will continue to follow SQA guidance and do everything we can to ensure that our pupils get the results they deserve.

It was confirmed during the week that Pitlochry High School will not be used as a Children's Activity Centre. All our parents who are Category 1 key workers and have applied for this provision will hear directly from Perth and Kinross Council about what is being offered to support them and their families.

Lots of our children were used to having a school dinner every day, so please note the guidance on Free School Meals that appears on the Perth and Kinross Council website:

In response to a further update on the social distancing advice, a decision has been taken to cancel the provision of meals in school buildings this week. We will provide direct payments to families entitled to free school meals with the first payment being made this week. If you have not made an application for free school meals previously because of automatic entitlement (likely to Primary 1 to Primary 3 pupils) parents should email ecsschools@pkc.gov.uk or call 0345 30 111 00 to let us know bank details to process payment.

Please make sure that you register if you fall into this category.

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We are keen to keep you informed, so please remember to check the website, Twitter and Parent Council Facebook page for up-dates, useful links, challenges and extra activities. If you aren't already signed up for Twitter, please consider doing so as Mr Mackenzie and the staff are working hard to share ideas and activities, as well as using this forum for sharing the children's successes and achievements.

We are, for the meantime, a "virtual school", but we are strong community and we need to stay in touch. I will send you a newsletter at the end of each week to keep you up-to-date, if you have any questions or queries you can phone the school office during working hours on 01796 474666, as the phone is now redirected or you can email the school at pitlochry@pkc.sch.uk.

I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to all of you who are supporting us in our community – the police, the refuse collectors, the post office workers, those working in our local shops, the carers, the NHS staff, delivery drivers and so many more. Thank you.

Please follow Scottish Government and NHS Scotland advice and keep you, your family and others safe.

Kind regards

Elaine Liney

Headteacher

Pitlochry High School