Johnstone High School 

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7th January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

Firstly, Happy New Year to all of our families. I hope that 2021 brings good health and happiness, and that we can soon enjoy better days together as the vaccination programme progresses through the community.

However, as you know the current situation has led to another period of enforced school closure in order to protect public health. We would all much rather have our pupils in school learning, but we realise that the situation is such that all sections of society – including schools – must play their part in the suppression of the virus.

Over the past few days, the Johnstone High staff have been preparing for two main tasks; supporting the pupils of keyworkers who will be coming into the building and getting ready for remote learning which commences on Monday 11th January 2021. I will address each of these in turn.

1. **Pupils who will be coming into school**

On Wednesday 6th January, the Pastoral team made efforts to contact all parents who had applied to the Council for a keyworker place for their child/ren in school. There are very clear criteria for who qualifies for a keyworker place, and only when these criteria are met is a child granted a place. The application process has now closed, however if your circumstances are such that you feel your child would qualify for a keyworker place (and you have no other childcare options) then please call the school on 0300 300 1331 and we will discuss eligibility with you.

Pupils who are coming into school will be marked absent if they do not attend on days when we are expecting them. Should your child be ill, please notify the office as soon as possible and your child will be recorded as an authorised absence. Similarly, if your circumstances change and you no longer require the place, please tell us and we will record your child as ‘learning at home’ on our Seemis attendance system.

We have already discussed our approach to how in-school learning will operate with keyworker parents and pupils. If a keyworker parent would like to discuss any aspect of provision for their child over this period, please contact the school and speak with pastoral staff in the first instance.

1. **Remote learning**

Remote learning will operate from Monday 11th January 2021. As far as is possible and reasonable, teachers will endeavour to deliver their timetabled classes remotely. Therefore, pupils will be expected to engage with their timetabled lessons each day.

The remote learning offer will vary across subject areas, but will typically include:

* the uploading of power points (potentially with teacher audio commentary)
* uploading of a range of materials including written pieces, videos and you-tube links
* live lessons
* tasks to be completed
* and most importantly, staff will be available for questions and feedback during timetabled periods

Our S1-3 pupils typically work on Satchel One (formerly Show My Homework) which has built in parental alerts; our S4-6 pupils work on Microsoft (MS) Teams which doesn’t have the parental link but has more functionality. Some teachers of S1-3 are keen to also work with their classes through MS Teams because of this enhanced functionality, and although this is a change from the previous lockdown, we are confident the pupils will cope because junior school use MS Teams in Computing. We have put together an up to date copy of ALL MS Team codes for every class, S4-6, for every subject (along with any that teachers are creating for S1-3). It will accompany this letter and be placed on the school website.

It is very important that young people are engaging with their timetabled classes from home. We will be actively progressing learning over the next few weeks. This will include the introduction of new content as staff continue with their delivery of the curriculum. For senior classes, SQA work will also continue. It is vital that S4-6 pupils are engaged and active in their learning in order to give themselves the best opportunity to maximise their final grade. I have asked staff to take a note of pupil attendance each period so we can offer families support if a pupil is struggling to engage. Therefore, we will be monitoring online attendance and will be getting in touch with you where we are worried that the young person will potentially fall behind through lack of engagement. If your child is not able to learn from home due to illness, please let us know about this too.

We are also aware that some pupils may have forgotten passwords or been locked out of Satchel One or Glow. We are in the process of putting together a short survey that will be texted out to you. It will ask about the availability of IT and Wifi in your home, ask if your child is able to get into Glow and Satchel One, and will ask of you require any physical materials such as jotters, pens etc. We will then do our best to support families to get remote learning up and running; this may be as simple as resetting your child’s Glow password, to delivering a stationary pack to your home.

To make things easier, we have created a tab on the Johnstone High website called remote learning. Over the next few days, we will populate this with materials to support parents and pupils. There will be a link to the Johnstone High remote learning website, which is full of teaching materials across a range of subjects, it will also house a list of subject specific links to resources, and any third-party websites that support the curriculum. Here you will also find the complete list of MS Team codes.

I would ask for your patience and support as we get all of this in place. Also, please be mindful that on the days staff are on rota to cover the children of keyworkers in school, they will not also be able to deliver their timetabled classes. Furthermore, teachers, like yourselves, have a range of family circumstances that can make remote working a challenge, such as home schooling their own children whilst trying to work. Like you, we will do our very best, and I am sure that by working together we will come through this difficult and challenging time.

If you have any concerns or queries about remote learning, please contact DHT Graham Munro on graham.munro@renfrewshire.school. We want to work with parents and if there are any problems, please get in touch sooner rather than later so we can sort things out at the earliest possibility.

At the moment the current school closure and lockdown are scheduled to be in place until the 1st February 2021, but this will be reviewed by Government in mid-January. Therefore, we do not know if this will be a three-week closure, or if it will be in place for a longer time period. For parents and carers of pupils in S4-6, we await guidance from SQA on the allocation of grades for 2021. We are in the fortunate position of having completed prelims in December and will be feeding back to pupils over the next few weeks. As soon as we have information from SQA we will get this to you.

There are other key features of school life that will also have to be addressed, such as options for pupils in S2-5. Again, we will keep in regular contact with you about how this will take place. If you haven’t already, please follow us on twitter for regular updates.

Finally, it is important to us that you know we are here for our parents and pupils should you need us during the next few weeks. Please do not hesitate to get in touch and we will do our best to help, or signpost families to appropriate services. It’s never been more important to look after each other.

With warmest wishes to you and your family,



Lynne Hollywood

Head Teacher