

**Head Teacher Update**

**12TH February 2021**

Dear Parent / Carer,

We hope that our families enjoyed the long weekend and managed to escape from the remote learning for a while! We welcomed pupils back, virtually, to online lessons on Thursday. There are seven weeks ahead of us until the Spring break which starts on the 2nd of April. This is usually one of the hardest terms in school, and it is also one of the most important as we power through a great deal of learning and teaching content.

Here are the main news items for this (short) week:

**Return of S4-6 for practical work only: 22nd February onwards**

As I mentioned in my letter last week, we are working with Renfrewshire Council and the other secondary schools on plans from the 22nd February to invite those senior phase pupils who require to be in school to complete practical elements of their SQA courses. This will be on a part time, limited basis.

Mr Menzies and I met with the Principal Teachers of the practical subjects\* (Art, Music, Technical, PE/HEc and Computing+Business) this week to hear directly from them what they need in terms of access to S4-6 pupils to carry out practical work, or in some cases, carry out assessments.

\*Please note that Science assignments have been removed from SQA this year, so pupils do not need to complete practical work for the Sciences this session.

We are waiting on national level guidance coming out today (at time of writing this has not yet been published), and I will be taking part in a meeting with the other secondary HTs on Monday morning. After this, JHS will then finalise our plans and get these sent home to S4-6 parents and pupils. This is likely to be around Wednesday/Thursday next week. Thanks for your patience and support around this – it is a fast moving and changeable situation.

**Home testing kits**

You may recall from my previous letter that the Scottish government announced that home testing kits will soon be made available to all S4-6 pupils. These have now arrived in school however we have been advised that these are **only to be issued to S4-6 pupils who are actually coming in the school building**. That will include the seniors who have a keyworker place in the hub, or those seniors who will be coming into school from the 22nd onwards to carry out practical tasks.

Until the government guidance comes out, we cannot be sure which children will be coming into school, therefore we are not yet able to invite pupils in to collect testing kits. When we are able to give you our plan for the return of seniors for practical work (see above), we will also include an update on access to home testing kits.

Finally, please note that home testing is voluntary and confidential, but I would encourage pupils to take part as it is another important way that we can keep our families and our community safe. Here is a link to more information on the council’s website:

[http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/coronavirus-schools/testing](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.renfrewshire.gov.uk%2Fcoronavirus-schools%2Ftesting&data=04%7C01%7Crachael.boyle%40renfrewshire.gov.uk%7C7f99737f42484baa495f08d8cf537ac1%7Cca2953361aa64486b2b2cf7669625305%7C0%7C0%7C637487304726376854%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=dgB5cBnIwdZq3xI3lLlCpRaLqLQM2RCZhwyZoi11fXI%3D&reserved=0)

**Options 2021-2022 Update from Mr Menzies, DHT Timetable**

At this stage of the academic year we are usually issuing pupil option forms prior to the options interviews taking place in early March. So far, we have completed the ‘dummy run’ process for pupils in S3-5 and we are using this information to help create the best options structure to maximise pupil choice. (As S2 pupils remain in the BGE in S3, their option form is standardised as they continue their studies within in the eight BGE curricular areas.)

Due to SQA extending the deadline for teacher professional judgment provisional grades to 18th June, and the fact that there is no SQA exam diet in 2021, the 2021/22 school timetable is likely to be postponed from the start of June until the end of that month (perhaps even August if circumstances dictate this). As a result, we have taken the decision to:

* Delay by a couple of weeks both the issuing the option forms to the current S2-5, along with our usual pupil/parent options interview process.
* Schedule option interviews before the spring break in early April, and this is likely to be carried out by phone call or an online meeting with parents and pupils.
* Distribute option forms in early March, giving parents and pupils enough time to make informed decisions about course choices for next session. Please remember to visit My World of Work for careers/options advice and guidance and remember that Pastoral staff and SDS are here to answer any questions that pupils or parents may have.

In the meantime, if you have any questions about this process, please do not hesitate to contact the school to discuss.

**Children and Young People’s Mental Health Week**

To finish of Mental Health Week, the JHS staff have put together a video for our pupils to let them know that we have not forgotten about them, and to remind them about how much they mean to us (we miss them terribly). My thanks to everyone who contributed, especially to Miss Wilson, Mr Munro and Mr McGivern who were key in getting the video put together. You can access it via this link:

<https://vimeo.com/511269593/72615620d9>

**Taskmaster challenge**

Miss Urquhart in Music is keen to bring the fun back into JHS during these tough times. She has organised the taskmaster challenge for pupil and families, which is open to all and is intended to be some light-hearted fun that might give you something to do at the weekend other than the family walk (surely it’s not just my family that protests about this!?!). I have included details at the bottom of this update, and Miss Urquhart will be promoting this directly with our pupils.

**Keeping in touch**

Please remember that we are here to help.

PT Pastoral (see above) will be your first point of contact; however, the office staff will always endeavor to get you through to the most appropriate person:

0300 300 1331. There is also the school enquiries email:

johnstonehighenquiries@renfrewshire.gov.uk

With best wishes to you and your family,



Lynne Hollywood

Head Teacher

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**THE TASKMASTER CHALLENGE!**

**Q’s & A’s**

• The challenge is open to staff, pupils and family members alike.

• You can participate in as many or as few challenges as you want.

• There is no winner!

• The challenge is a bit of fun and the aim of the game is to cheer people up and make them laugh.

**Instructions:**

1. Join the Team. **MS TEAM CODE 4g1ettc**

2. Read the Task Master Challenge assignment.

3. Create a video of you completing the challenge.

4. Videos should be a maximum of 15 seconds.

5. Upload your video to the Challenge assignment by the deadline provided.

6. Tune in to the MS Team or the school You Tube channel the following Friday to view all the submissions and find out the next challenge.

**Game rules:**

1. All video content must be **school appropriate.**

2. Videos not deemed appropriate:

– will not be included in the weekly show reel

– the pupils responsible will be removed from the team and will not be included in future tasks.

3. All tasks must be carried out with the permission of your parent/guardian.

4. You will not include anyone in your video without their permission and knowledge of being filmed.

**Safeguarding (info for parents and carers)**

1. All tasks will be moderated to ensure they are child-friendly and safe.
2. All videos will be vetted by a team of staff members to ensure content is appropriate and safe.
3. Videos will be uploaded to the school You Tube channel and shared on the school social media.
4. By submitting a video, you and your family/household are giving permission for the footage to be shared via the school’s You Tube and social media.