Johnstone High School 

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19th February 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

From Monday 22nd February, we will be welcoming small groups of S4-6 pupils into school as per a two week ‘block’ timetable to concentrate on practical tasks. I wrote to S4-6 parents and carers on Wednesday 17th February with detailed information about our arrangements. This letter was posted home and can also be accessed on our website and twitter feed.

It is important to ensure that parents and carers of S1-3 pupils are also aware of what is planned, as some of the new arrangements may have an impact on younger pupils.

From Monday, more adults in our community are going back to work, in line with the First Minister’s announcement on 16th February. Examples of this would be early education staff and primary school teachers. As a result, more pupils will be taking up a keyworker place in Johnstone High School. Therefore, we will need to bring more of our teachers into school to cover these keyworker children.

In addition, teachers of practical subjects will also be coming into school regularly to teach seniors in planned ‘blocks’, as per the timetable sent out on Wednesday. As I have mentioned in communications to parents previously, staff cannot do two jobs at once; they cannot work in the hub covering key worker children, or deliver SQA practical work with groups of seniors, and also maintain the remote learning offer that is currently in place.

I know that the Johnstone High School staff will continue to do their very best for all young people, however I feel that I should bring to your attention that it is likely that there will be some disruption to the remote learning timetable. S1-3 pupils may find that they are receiving fewer live lessons and instead are being issued with more tasks that they can work on independently at home; this will be because their teacher is in the hub or is in school teaching practical. The difficult decision was made by government to prioritise seniors for in-school teaching over pupils in the broad general education; this is, of course, because of their certificated SQA courses.

I would also like to take this opportunity to mention our tracking of ‘non-engagement’ of pupils with remote learning. Over the past few weeks, we have had to design and create a system to alert parents when their child is not engaging with remote learning. Our main aim has been to make sure that all of our children and families are safe and well, and that they are coping with the home learning demands in this second lockdown. In order to keep our communications with families manageable, we decided that non-engagement would be defined as:

**when a pupil has not submitted ANY work in a subject area**

**over the tracking period (typically a week)**

We appreciate that a child tuning in to a live lesson may appear to be engaging, however staff are noticing that some pupils are simply turning on their device and not actually taking part or engaging in any way. This is why the submission of work is a much more accurate measure of active engagement.

In S1-3 we did not want to send out individual texts from each subject area as this could overwhelm families with 5, 6, 7 (or even more) texts if their child is struggling. However, in S4-6 we decided it would be appropriate to send out individual subject specific texts as seniors study fewer subjects and these are SQA courses (so parents need to know!).

If you receive a ‘non-engagement’ text, here is the action that we would recommend:

* Firstly, please discuss it with your child – they will have a good idea of the subjects where they have not been handing in ANY work
* Ask them to show you their MS teams / Sachel One for each subject. All the work teachers ask them to hand in will be on here. If you are still unsure, please email us on johnstonehighenquiries@renfrewshire.gov.uk and someone will get back to you. Please note that on the days when non-engagement texts go out, the school office experiences extremely high call volumes and you may not get through first time (hence the option to email).
* Typically, if you require to speak to the PT of the subject it is likely that they will then tell you that the work that has not been handed in can be located on the MS team or in Satchel one (see above)

Finally, it’s really important that I emphasise to parents that these non-engagement texts are not intended to add pressure to families or create conflict. We want to support you, and if your child is struggling to engage we know that this can be for a range of reasons, and can include IT issues, technical hitches or even communication issues between the pupil and teacher. Please remember that these texts are to give parents a ‘heads-up’ that your child is not handing in any work in at least one subject – we want to help and we also want to make sure that no child falls behind. We also know that compared with the first lockdown, more of our pupils are struggling to cope and that mental health issues can be an issue. Please reach out to us if you need support.

I hope that his letter finds you and your family safe and well. Please pass on our warmest wishes to your child. We miss them very much.

Yours sincerely,



Lynne Hollywood

Head Teacher