



John Devine M.A. (Hons); M.Ed; SQH
Headteacher

Breadalbane Academy
ABERFELDY PH15 2DU
Tel 01887 822300 • Fax 01887 820464
Email breadalbane@pkc.gov.uk
Website www.breadalbane.pkc.sch.uk

Dear Parent/Carer

Headteacher's Update

I do hope that you and your family are coping with the current challenges that we are all facing. As we are now three days into school closure, I thought I should provide you with an update.

- **Remote Learning**

May I begin by thanking you for your efforts in supporting home learning. You and your child/children should by now have a good idea of what support is available across the school. (Further information is available on our website under the 'Coronavirus' tab.) As soon as we became aware that there was any possibility of school closure, we worked very hard to develop a resilience plan for maintaining learning and teaching, and I am really proud of the progress that both staff and pupils have made in getting themselves ready for this week.

However, I would ask that you bear with us as we aim to refine further our home learning offer over the coming weeks. We realise that we may well be in for the long-haul here and are therefore working towards developing really rich approaches to learning which include two-way communication between all teachers and pupils, including feedback on learning; as well as robust approaches towards assessment.

With so many staff in the Council moving to home working, there has been enormous pressure on the Perth and Kinross Council internal network this week which has resulted in school staff being prohibited from going online with their school devices for much of the traditional school day. This has obviously made life a lot more difficult for staff, who are pressing on nevertheless, using personal devices where possible or going online outwith school hours. We believe the Council will improve capacity in this area in the very near future which should support us in developing our offer to young people. In the meantime, if there is any aspect of the home learning arrangement about which you have any queries, please do contact the school at our email address and someone will get back to you.

- **SQA**

You will probably be aware that the recent decision of Perth and Kinross Council not to offer additional support to SQA pupils in school this week, as had been planned, was the result of a policy change at national level. The SQA has since announced that it will not be asking schools to submit coursework for Higher or Advanced Higher, though it appears that they still plan to mark work at National 5 level that has already been submitted. The SQA has yet to provide detail of the methodology it will use to arrive at grades in the absence of examinations, but you can be sure that a key driver will be the need to ensure equity of outcome for all pupils, irrespective of their circumstances at the point the decision to abandon examinations was taken. As for the school, we will continue to follow closely evolving SQA guidance and do everything we can to ensure that our results remain as strong as ever.



- **Hubs/Children's Activity Centres for Children of Key Workers**

It has now been confirmed that Breadalbane Community Campus will not be used to accommodate one of these centres. Parents who have applied for this provision will hear directly from Perth and Kinross Council about what is being offered.

- **Free School Meals**

Can I take this opportunity to draw parents' attention to this 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.

- **A virtual school**

It is not just continuity in learning and teaching that we are aiming to achieve, but continuity, in general, of the function of the school. They say necessity is the mother of invention and it is quite remarkable how quickly staff are deploying technology to ensure as much as possible it is business as usual. For example, the senior management team has already met through video on several occasions and we are seeking to replicate this approach for other regular staff meetings – such as secondary and primary departments meetings – before Easter. Two major tasks that remain ongoing at whole school level are the secondary timetable for 2020/21 and ensuring staffing across the whole school for new session. Both these remain on course.

As is the case for the wider community, our school community is working hard to overcome the current challenges in these difficult times. My staff and I are committed to ensuring that Breadalbane Academy remains every bit as good a virtual school as it is in its more traditional form. I trust that all our families will also rise to the challenges of these times and hope you will remain safe and healthy in the weeks to come.

Yours faithfully

John Devine
Headteacher

