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10th May 2020

Dear Parent / Carer

I hope my letter finds you and your loved ones safe and well.

A huge thank you once again to all those in our community who continue to work tirelessly to keep us safe and well. Thanks too to all the staff and community partners who continue to support our children's welfare and learning in these uncertain times.

I noted last week that some parents have different views on how much information we share. For this reason the letters are sub-divided. Certain things are essential reading, for example guidance on online courses; other sections may be desirable reading, for example learning about Government guidance to schools or school management structures. By providing both, we ensure that all parents are, hopefully, as re-assured as anyone can be during such uncertain times.

Planning for the future

I believe you will find it reassuring to know that although the Lockdown has been extended for another three weeks, we continue to plan for dealing with both the extended lockdown and our inevitable return, whenever that may be, and in whatever form it may take. Throughout the course of the week, following guidance issued by the Scottish Government, I have been in discussion with Argyll and Bute Council's Heads of Service for Education and with Head Teachers from across the country around planning for the future.

I have attached three school management planning templates to give you an idea of the strategies and systems we have in place to look after the welfare of our children, to develop online learning and how we are planning for a fuller return to school, when we are advised the time is right.

Online learning

I noted last week that we learned of the need to provide learning opportunities in smaller chunks – no dropping whole units into Google Classes at once. I also noted that pupils and parents need to be realistic about the time required of staff to reply to any work returned from across their 200 pupils.

Another lesson we have learned is that, as staff and pupils are gaining more experience and skills, they are both making more use of all the Google Apps. This, in turn, is raising further questions and difficulties because of the higher level and more expansive use of the online

facilities. We have established a new IT support GC and this will go live this week. This group will support both staff and pupils to overcome online issues.

If any pupil has any difficulty at all please send us an email to:

<http://www.obanhigh.argyll-bute.sch.uk/contact>

Thereafter our staff will contact you to help with wifi issues; device issues; logging onto Glow or GC issues or to help understand the online work.

Support for all

As much as we are ensuring that all our families have the capability to get online and that there is online learning opportunities available for those who can manage them, there will be times when the stresses of families all working from home becomes too much; times when family learning, in whatever form that may be, takes precedence over school online provision; and times when school lessons or work are the least of our troubles. In these times, please do not worry about online school.

We are providing a service of online engagement to help parents and their children find structure to the day and to provide children with activities to keep them mentally and physically active. We are not trying to deliver a curriculum, not trying to replicate school at home and do not expect you, the parent, to become a teacher. If you cannot engage because of IT issues, we will help fix this. If you need pastoral support, we can also offer this.

Welfare check

The one point of contact we do absolutely need each week is through the Welfare check system. This welfare check procedure went reasonably well again this week. Although the holiday impacted on a significant rise in those not logging on at the start of the week, the emails and subsequent phone calls and home visits have ensured that every child is accounted for, is safe and well and has been offered support: pastoral, academic and IT where required.

Please keep encouraging your child to log on to the My Time Google Class every Monday. Let us know all is well and if you need help and support.

Transition of P7 to S1

Lauren Morrison, our Depute Head Teacher responsible for Transition, has established a new Google Class for Transition. Each week we will upload useful guidance for P7 pupils and their parents/carers. This week, we uploaded an online tour of the school and introductory interviews with some staff. We will upload this Google Class each Friday.

Also being worked on currently is a separate Gaelic Medium Google Classroom. We hope to have more information and the establishment of online conversational classes established this week.

The vast majority of pupils from our 19 Partner Primaries all use Glow and Google Classroom (GC) already. We continue to work with our Primary colleagues to ensure all pupils have their Glow Login and Password and that they are aware of how to use Google Classroom.

The new Google Classroom for all P7s has been logged on to by 122 pupils so far. The GC code is **uv24716**. Please note that what looks like a 1 in the code is a small letter L. (Uniform, Victor 2 4 7 Lima 6)

Just log into Glow, then into Google Classroom, click the plus button and add this code. If you do not have a Glow Login or password, please contact your Primary school.

I would remind parents/carers to consider downloading our "School App for Parents", free from the App store. This will allow you to receive notifications when we issue letters, to see the calendar and follow school news. You can find all our policies, handbook and communications to parents on our website.

Useful info for all parents/carers

I would also encourage parents/carers (and staff), if they wish, to keep an eye on resources that can help with online delivery, for example SCHOLAR (for senior pupils) and BBC Bitesize. There are also new BBC educational programmes being aired each day at 10 a.m.

As always, if anyone wishes to contact us about anything. Feel free to email your child's Guidance Teacher or contact us at:

<http://www.obanhigh.argyll-bute.sch.uk/contact>

Stay home, stay online, stay safe, stay learning.

Yours faithfully



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