

Dear Parent / Carer,

COVID-19 – Update

I would like to begin by extending my heartfelt thanks to the entire Portobello High School community. This week has been like no other in my experience of education and the way in which our young people, families and staff have responded has been both humbling and inspiring. The number of people who have offered help, volunteered and gone truly over and above is incredible. The support from our parent community has been fantastic - thank you all.

At the time of writing, we do not know when school will reopen. We will share further information when it becomes available. Our primary consideration will remain the health and wellbeing of young people and staff.

Please find attached a number of documents:

- A letter from Andy Gray, Chief Education Officer
- CEC Guidance for Parents During School Closure
- Information for Parents and Carers regarding Additional Support for Learning
- PHS Arrangements for Distance Learning

These documents contain a wide range of useful information designed to support families during the period of closure. Staff will be working throughout the school closure and will be contactable via email. Please bear in mind that staff may themselves be unwell during this time. The main email contact address for the school is admin@portobello.edin.sch.uk – messages for any member of staff can be sent to this address for forwarding.

Over the last few days, a tremendous effort from staff has allowed us to develop a strategy for Distance Learning during the closure period. We have designed this with the following in mind:

- that young people will benefit from some structure at a time of uncertainty
- that parents and carers will appreciate some contact with school on a daily basis, Monday – Friday
- that a sense of routine of some sort will be an important support to wellbeing for all of us at a time of heightened anxiety.

At present, this arrangement is focussed on the period up until Friday 3 April. The attached document sets out these arrangements. We were particularly aware that some young people in S1 and S2 did not have a tablet or computer at home. I am very grateful to those leavers who have returned their iPads early to allow us to distribute them to younger pupils so that they can access online learning and stay in touch with school.

Discussions continue over arrangements to support young people who were due to sit SQA examinations this year with the completion of coursework. Some of this will be possible remotely and we will provide further advice when it is available. We share the disappointment felt by young people who have been working hard and will not now sit exams and remain committed to doing our best to support them in their next steps whether in school or beyond.

We are in the process of developing a communications strategy for the closure period and aim to stay in regular contact with our young people and families.

Finally, on behalf of all the staff in Portobello High School, I send every good wish to all our families at this worrying time – we will all be thinking of our young people.

Yours sincerely,



Ruth McKay

Headteacher



PORTOBELLO
HIGH SCHOOL

Portobello High School
1 Milton Road
Edinburgh
EH15 3BY
Tel: 0131 669 2324

Head Teacher: Ruth McKay



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THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

Email: admin@portobello.edin.sch.uk
Web: www.portobello.edin.sch.uk
Twitter: @portobellohigh