

## Weekly Update – 3 April 2020



*Bailey Ewing Burnet, S1*

### **Message from Mrs McKay**

While it certainly doesn't feel like the end of term, the calendar says that it is. As we have been getting used to our 'new normal' over the past couple of weeks, we have really missed our young people and families. Many of you have been kind enough to get in touch and let us know that you have appreciated the school's support through this difficult time and I would like to say a heartfelt thank you for all of those messages – they really do mean a lot.

I know many families share my own view that our world has become increasingly materialistic. Many of us have feel that the impact of social media and the obsession with celebrity has led to a climate which encourages people to focus on what they don't have. It can be hard growing up in a world of such intense pressures and I know that many of our families feel that, too. I hope that one thing which might come of the difficulties we are all facing just now, is an appreciation of what we do have. In the words of Ross Wilson of Blue Rose Code, songwriter, musician and former pupil of Portobello High School, 'When I wake up in the morning now...I try to be thankful.'

Though we would all rather avoid situations like the one we are faced with currently, they do have a funny way of reminding us what is really important - our family, our friends, our health. In other words, our relationships. When we are able to return to the lives that perhaps we took for granted before, I am sure it will be with a renewed sense of purpose and perspective.

At this time of global crisis, it doesn't feel appropriate to wish you a happy holiday but I certainly wish you a healthy holiday and one in which you are able to find some peace and a chance to be grateful.

## **Thanks to staff**

I have been humbled by the care and commitment shown by our staff team over this period in so many ways. Whether delivering food parcels or vital medication, keeping in touch with families for whom the current situation is particularly difficult or finding creative ways to keep learning going at a distance, their support has been tremendous and is absolutely at the heart of #TeamPorty.

I'd like to take this chance to make particular mention of two people who spend most of their working lives behind the scenes, but whose skills and determination have seen us overcome all sorts of obstacles in the last couple of weeks. Mrs Jackie Laird in our school office has put exceptional effort into managing responses in the admin mailbox to assist pupils and families since working from home – all whilst learning to navigate an iPad rather than her familiar desktop set up. From passing on messages and assignment work to teachers or technical questions regarding iPad resets to sorting out free school meal allowances, she is now known to many as Jackie rather than Mrs Laird and has most frequently been described by parents as 'a star'.

Special thanks, too, to Mrs Tracy McDonald, also based in our school office. Tracy's determination and laser-like focus have seen her find solutions to many seemingly insurmountable technical issues. Keeping a school office running while working remotely is no mean feat. Tracy has a knack of anticipating what might be required before anyone else has thought of it and it's a skill which has been much in demand recently.

Finally, I'd like to thank Mr Dave McKee, our Curriculum Leader for Business and Computing. His skill and perseverance in setting up our digital learning platform has been invaluable – quite simply we would not have been able to put such a large-scale and sophisticated system in place without him. He has also been the go-to person for any and all staff who have needed to ask a technical question – that's a lot of people in a school the size of Porty! His commitment to supporting the professional learning of colleagues is fantastic. Thank you to him – we hope he gets a little more time to play his bass guitar over the next two weeks!

## **Contacting the School**

Please bear in mind that we have no access to our school switchboard at this time so we are unable to access any messages left on the school answering service. Staff are using personal phones to make contact where need be – please be aware that these will show as 'No Caller ID'. We hope to be able to provide telephone numbers for parents and young people to contact our Pupil Support Leaders direct on our return from the holidays.

## **SQA**

A letter has been sent home to all families with young people in S4-6 regarding the latest information from the SQA. We anticipate further information will be available on our return from holiday.

## **#TeamPortyCooks**

At a time when we are all apart, we are keen to find ways of staying together as a school community. Following on from a four-legged theme last week, this week we invited young people and staff to share their creative efforts in the kitchen – hop over to our school Twitter account @PortobelloHigh for a look!

There have been some incredible contributions – a selection below – and we will keep this theme going over the holidays.

We had a request for the recipe used by Ms Breingan for her Irish Soda Bread. She has kindly shared this and says her Granny would be very proud!



### ***Granny Cameron's Oven Wheaten***

- 1 cup plain flour
- 1 cup wheat meal flour
- 1 tsp baking soda
- ½ tsp salt
- 2 tsp caster sugar
- 2 oz hard margarine or butter
- 1 egg
- Buttermilk approx. half a cup \*

\* Lots of easy recipes online about how to make your own, if needed

#### Method:

1. Rub margarine/butter into dry ingredients until you have an even breadcrumb consistency
2. Beat egg and slowly stir into the dry mix
3. Add enough buttermilk to make a fairly firm dough
4. Minimal kneading required; pop dough into a loaf tin or shape into a cob and place on baking tray.
5. Bake in a hot oven for about 30 mins



L-R: Ella Nicholson, S1, Stuffed Crust 'Bottom of the Fridge Pizza. Elsa McGregor, S1 Homemade Pasta, Martha O'Hanlon, S1, Banana Cake



## Distance Learning

Ms Moghadam's S4 Biology class have been experimenting this week with video-conferencing. This allowed them to link up with two former colleagues of Ms Moghadam's working in the field and extend their learning around DNA and Biodiversity.

Also featured this week, some outstanding art work from Grace Bickmore, S5.

