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## Weekly Update 25<sup>th</sup> February 2022

We have all been shocked and concerned by the events in Ukraine this week. Many parents and carers will recall what it was like to grow up during the Cold War - for today's young people, the events unfolding in Eastern Europe come on the back of two years which have already involved a lot of uncertainty. While they continue to impress us with their resilience and adaptability, we are aware that current events will be a further source of concern to them.

We are also very conscious that there are families within our school community who have relatives or friends in affected areas or who will be directly affected in various ways. Please let your young person's Pupil Support Leader know if you have any concerns.



## Covid-19 – Updated Guidance for Schools

During the February break, the Scottish Government published updated guidance for schools which will be phased in from Monday 28 February. The main aspects of this are set out below:

- **Face Coverings** From next week, young people will - in general - no longer be required to wear a face covering in classrooms but will still need to do so in corridors and communal areas. Due to the fact that physical distancing is still in place in schools between adults and between adults and young people, staff may ask a young person to put on a face covering if they need to spend time closer to them, for example to give them help with their work. Please note that anyone who wishes to continue to wear a face covering is free to do so.
- **Classroom Layouts** Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have been required to organise classrooms in front-facing rows. From next week we are able to revert to groups and other arrangements in line with individual teacher preferences.
- **Gatherings** Restrictions on gatherings in school have been relaxed and we will shortly be able to bring back events like assemblies with appropriate additional measures such as ventilation and face coverings.

While this is all very welcome news, it is important to remember that a range of mitigations remain in place and school has not yet 'gone back to normal'. We will continue to emphasise the

importance of hand and respiratory hygiene, good ventilation, LFD testing etc. We are also mindful that levels of anxiety remain heightened for many people, so we will be taking a gradual approach to implementation in order to allow our school community time to adapt.

### **Staff Update**

We welcomed Chloe Russell and Lisa McIntyre - two new Administration Officers - to our school office this week and Mr Callum Sinclair joins us on Monday as a temporary Teacher of Social Subjects.

### **Live-N-Learn Workshops**

We are delighted to say the study support workshops with our partner, Live-N-Learn, started on Tuesday and have been well received by our young people. A summary of the content is included again below. There are still three more workshop days to go to ensure that all our S4, S5 and S6 students can attend.



As part of this programme, we would like to invite parents and carers to join us and two of the facilitators from Live-n-Learn to hear all about the programme, as well as practical tips on how to best support your young person both with their revision and mental health and wellbeing in the run up to and during the exam period.

The session for S4 parents will take place on Tuesday 1st March at 6.30 pm for around 45 minutes and a link will be sent home to all parents and carers at the beginning of the week.

The session for S5/6 parents and carers will take place on Tuesday 8th March at 6.30 pm and the link will be sent home nearer the time.

Recordings of both sessions will be available on a password protected section of the school website after 8th March.

Our Mindset for Revision programme for S4 includes the following themes: -

- Taking personal responsibility and 'making it happen'
- Time management & prioritisation
- Developing a growth mindset & building resilience
- 4 step revision process with 30 study strategies

- Overcoming distractions
- Grasping opportunities

Our Significant '6' programme for S5/6 includes the following themes: -

- Taking Control: Chaos isn't productive!
- Motivation v's Discipline: What is a winning attitude?
- Studying Effectively: Developing good study behaviours
- Incremental Improvements: 'Forget about perfection, focus on progression'
- Responding to Feedback: Austin's Butterfly Theory
- The Bigger Picture: Creating a resilience plan

A big thank you to Ms Breingan in Pupil Support for all her organisation!

### **Modern Languages N5 And Higher Talking Exams – March 2022**

Young people studying National 5 or Higher French or Spanish have this week completed working on the final drafts of their content to be learned for their upcoming Talking exams. These will take place as follows:



*French - week beginning Monday 14<sup>th</sup> March*

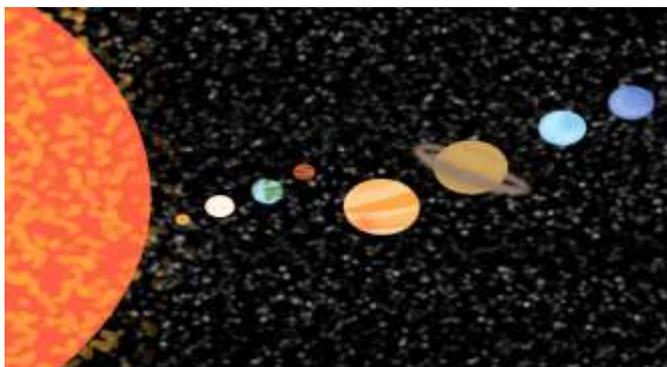
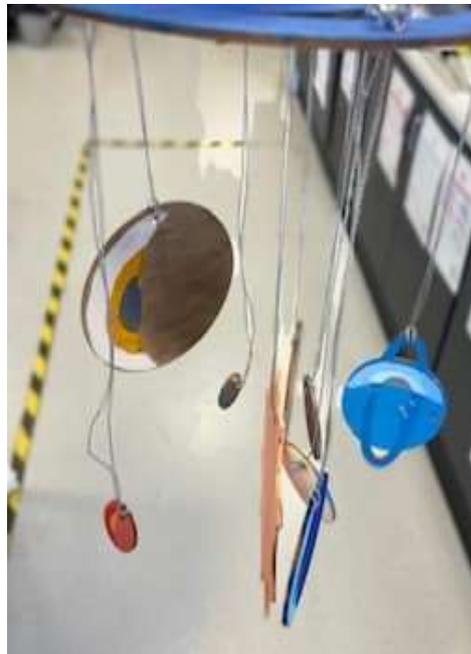
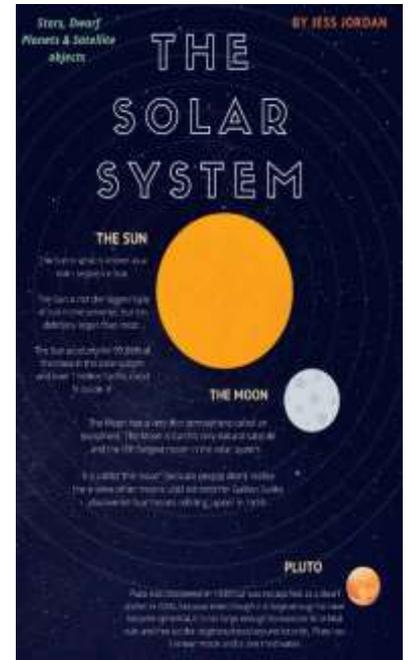
*Spanish – week beginning Monday 21<sup>st</sup> March*

Young people should be working at home well in advance of these dates to memorise their content for these exams. The Talking element is worth 25% of the final award for both N5 and Higher and therefore a strong performance in it is crucial in order to succeed at these levels. Supported study takes place on Wednesday and Thursdays in the Modern Languages department and we would encourage pupils to attend this to get additional help with their talking exam.

If parents/carers have any questions regarding these Talking exams, please contact Mr McCulloch at [andrew.mcculloch@portobello.edin.sch.uk](mailto:andrew.mcculloch@portobello.edin.sch.uk).

# Science

Mrs Allan's S2 science classes were asked to make a solar system for homework. The quality has been amazing, with lots of fact filled PowerPoints, posters and models. Pictured are some examples of the more unusual hand ins.



## Senior Music Recital

Well done to all our National 5 and Higher Music pupils who performed at the Senior Music Recital on Wednesday evening. Pupils had the opportunity to perform a piece from their SQA programme ahead of their final exams coming up in March.

Performances such as this are an important part in developing musicianship, performing skills and confidence, as well as being excellent exam prep. It is also good to be able to share the fruits of their hard work in a concert performance, as well as an exam!



## Digital Literacy

Sam Jordan (11) created a fantastic information sheet for P7 pupils using his fantastic Word Processing skills in Digital Literacy with Miss Richards.



Portobello High School!

School facilities!

In the school we have a swimming pool, computers, pianos, guitars, iPads and so much more! We use these to learn and find out how to use them. I think the school has done a good job providing them!

Key Teachers!

All the teachers in the school are lovely and are always trying to help when you need it. Your key adult teacher is the one you will have in registration class and if you are worrying about anything, you can speak to your guidance teacher!

Subjects!

*All the subjects in high school are ten times better than the ones at primary school, my personal favourite subject is history because you learn so much about what happened in the olden days! Another great subject is FTT, in FTT you bake cakes, soup and so many meals. The best thing about it is that you get to eat it afterwards!*

School Day

The school day is really fun and you get to do all the best subjects. In the first week you get a timetable so you can figure out where your classroom is because the school is quite big. After the first two weeks you know where you're going so you don't need to worry. If you're lost, just ask a staff member or find a teacher, school starts at 8:25 but you get used to getting up a bit earlier!

Favourite Part of School

*My favourite part of school is making new friends and doing all the fun work! On the first day it might feel a bit scary but look confident and then you'll feel great! Try talking to people in your new class and introduce them to your other friends! Anyway high school is super fun and YOU WILL LOVE IT!*



## **Eco Committee Garden Clean-Up Day March 19<sup>th</sup>**

**OUR GARDEN NEEDS YOU!**

Since the pandemic, our once thriving school kitchen garden is looking very overgrown and sad. The current Eco Committee have some great ideas about how this space could be used to increase biodiversity and become a place we can really use. We would like to grow food we can use in school, as well as providing a space that can be used for outdoor learning and well-being activities.

But it's a big job....

**WE NEED YOUR HELP!**



The Eco Committee are running a Garden Clean Up day and looking for volunteers (pupils, staff, parents and carers) to come and help us restore our growing space to its former glory. No gardening experience is necessary, but we would appreciate input from anyone with a bit of know-how. All welcome

Please contact Ms Crawford, FTT if you would like to join us

[Catriona.1.Crawford@portobello.edin.sch.uk](mailto:Catriona.1.Crawford@portobello.edin.sch.uk)