**Parent - Learning and Teaching Update 15 May 2020**

Dear Parent / Carer

**Key Information on:** Students starting new levels/ courses

New School time table change session 2020-21

New stage level timetables 18/5/20 for home learning

Learner Expectations

SQA Estimates

S1-3 Reports in June 2020

Distance Learning

Thank you for your continued feedback on our new timetable for S1-3 and senior phase pupils. It has been very helpful to receive your comments and we will continue to refine our approaches to on-line learning over the next few months. This is another update.

We continue to develop the timetable for next session which is scheduled to officially start on 1st of June 2020. This is the same date for all Midlothian Secondary schools. As I said in my last letter, the task of constructing a timetable and coursing students at all levels continues to be challenging but Guidance Staff and Principal Teachers have been working together to counsel and guide students in their choices and this work will be on-going through until the end of session and later in August after results are delivered by SQA. We are continuing to review staffing and the subjects offered and this may mean some courses may be subject to change or not run on the new Timetable. Several staff positions are currently being recruited in: Art, Behaviour Support, Music and Modern Languages. At present Course choice has been paused due to the need to construct timetable columns as we prepare the 1 June timetable model. This will help track student numbers if we need to recourse particular areas. We are also, as mentioned in my last letter, creating a sensible progression into new courses for all students through a phased approach. New timetables from 18 May 2020 are included at the end of the letter. **A reminder that that there are two key dates to note:**

**Monday 18 May 2020**– Senior phase Google classrooms will change from this date so students will be able to enter new Google classrooms at the level of study they aspire to continue onto in Session 2020-21 for National, Higher and Advanced Higher level courses. Principal Teachers will need to decide how these are staffed and supported, based on current staffing. Staff will invite students to enter the classrooms based on their current subject choices. Guidance staff / key contact staff will follow up if students do not engage: **full engagement with new courses and programmes is an absolute expectation**. I would ask all parents/carers to emphasise this change with your young person at home. Please contact their Guidance Teacher if you feel there are any issues during this phase.

**For Broad General Education (BGE) classes at S1-2**. From 18 May 2020, teaching staff will in most cases be using the existing class rooms as they already know the young person’s progress and have been supporting them. In this case they will start to put up work at the next level to ensure students are accessing work representative of the next stage in learning e.g. S1 into S2. Staff will continue to differentiate work to assist students at all levels but we do expect challenge and progression. In some cases at S1-2, teaching staff may decide that they will set up new classrooms and they will communicate this to students and invite them to join.

**At BGE S3** we are asking staff to create new Google classrooms by 18 May, 2020 and students will be asked to join based on their student choice information we currently have available. Guidance staff have followed up on students who are yet to finalise their choices. We will follow up before the end of Term on any student who fails to engage or participate in the new Google classrooms. As this is the beginning. **We would ask all parents/ carers to monitor this aspect of distance learning and seek our support if you have any issues with access or engagement.**

**PLEASE NOTE**: **Staff will invite students to enter the relevant Google classrooms based on their knowledge of who has selected their course. If student have any issues with this process they should email their Guidance teacher. For GLOW password resets or general queries- please email: penicik\_hs@midlothian.gov.uk**

**1 June 2020** – **on this date the new Timetable for Session 2020-21 will start**. At this stage we expect all Senior Phase students and S3 will join a class staffed by their new Teacher but in some cases recruitment to vacancies that begin in August or staff absence may mean that is not a possible for all classes. In that case classes will operate supported by another teacher until August 2020. Classes at S1-2 will start moving into new Google classrooms over this period where resources allow. We would want all S1-2 students to be in correct class groups by August 2020. *Again it should be stressed that for S1-2 they will be progressing in their learning into the next stage on the Google platform from 18 May*

**Updated - Details of Phased Action**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Week of** | **Activity** |
| 18 May | As outlined above the Timetable levels change for BGE- S1-3/ Senior phase.  **All students must be engaging with these changes in order to allow appropriate progression**. A lack of engagement may result in a review of their enrolment in that course |
| From 25 May | On –going Issues with senior or BGE Courses will be monitored and dealt with through Guidance/SMT or other key contact staff from this date |
| I June | New Timetable 2020-21 starts as described earlier in this information |
| 4 August | **Tuesday 4th August** – SQA candidates receiveresults |
| 4 August  onward | Re-coursing based on results and other needs will be on-going. Parents will be involved in this process |

**New Stage Level Timetables for Home Learning – 18 May 2020**

The following timetables below are designed to help our pupils plan and access new learning activities every day. It will also mean that any ‘due dates’ for assignments/ marked work can be staggered. In summary -

* Teachers and Google Classroom groups can be identified on-line
* Teachers of each group will designate the work to be undertaken
* The code for each Google Classroom is available from teachers
* Where possible, work set should be completed for the following week on the same day & time, unless otherwise stated by the Teacher.
* We are aware that some students have become stressed or anxious over overlapping deadlines or their failure to meet deadlines. **If your child experiences any anxiety / stress or needs more guidance and feedback from the teacher plea contact them via the Google Classroom to discuss OR contact their guidance Teacher by email.**

Timetables are indicative only and a guide. A child’s learning experience and degree of participation will need to be guided by you at home based on your own context including: any health issues in the home, access to a computer at varying times, difficulty with work, availability of parental support and supervision and the young person’s level anxiety and stress.

**Please see section on Learner Expectations.**

**New Timetables**

New **S2 from 18th May 2020**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Monday** | **Tuesday** | **Wednesday** | **Thursday** | **Friday** |
| * Music * Modern Languages * Maths & Numeracy | * Social Subjects * English & Literacy * Science | * Home Economics * CDT * RMPS * Art & Design | * PSE * ICT | * PE |

New **S3 from 18th May 2020**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Monday** | **Tuesday** | **Wednesday** | **Thursday** | **Friday** |
| * Computing Science * History * English | * Art & Design * Bus Mgt * Construction * Maths | * Geography * PSE * Media * Music Technology | * Mod Languages * Design and Manufacture * Chemistry * Biology * Physics * Photography * Environmental Science | * RMPS * Music * Practical Cookery * PE |

New **S4 from 18th May 2020**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Monday** | **Tuesday** | **Wednesday** | **Thursday** | **Friday** |
| * Music * Art & Design * Biology | * History * Geography * RMPS * Business Management * Media * Chemistry | * English & Literacy * Design & Manufacture * Spanish * Health & Food Tech * Physics | * PSE * Computing Studies * French * Construction * Maths &   Numeracy | * PE * Practical Cookery * Photography |

New **S5&6 from 18th May 2020**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Monday** | **Tuesday** | **Wednesday** | **Thursday** | **Friday** |
| * RMPS * Bus.Ed. * Early Learning & Childcare * Biology * Chemistry * Physics * Art & Design | * Computing * Practical Cookery * French * Spanish | * Maths * Woodworking * Music | * English Higher & N5 * Media * Scottish Studies | * PE Higher * PE Sports Leaders * Work to continue on the foregoing courses, as appropriate |

**Learner Expectations**

Distance Learning is likely to be the reality for some time to come but at some point will be used to support a phased return to school. Distance learning has the potential to create gaps in young people’s learning and progress depending on access to suitable digital devices, motivation and engagement, parental supervision and ability to work independently for at least some of the time.

We are working constantly to contact and support all students but particularly those who are seen as currently vulnerable. All students should at least be emailed initially with a follow up call later. We note that vulnerability can change and that is why we have consistently asked you to contact us by email expressing any concerns and telling us how we can help.

**Our expectations are**:

● **Senior phase students** (S1-4) should complete 2-3 hours per senior subject per week unless there are particular reasons why this may not be possible. If you think we are not aware of these circumstance please get in touch.

● **Students from S1-3** should complete at least an hour per subject per week unless there are particular reasons why this may not be possible. If you think we are not aware of these circumstance please get in touch.

● **From the change of Timetable the work provided for senior classes is preparation for the exam** and therefore it is important that senior students approach Google Classroom assignments with the same attitude and effort that they would show in class. Re-coursing may occur if students do not fully engage and participate without good cause.

● All Pupils should check Google Classrooms regularly and feel confident that they are able to contact staff via classrooms if they are having any difficulties.  
  
● **New Google Classroom;** Teachers will invite students into the relevant classroom and pupils should attempt to sign up on Tuesday 19th May. *Teachers will also put details in the old classroom*

Subjects will tend to put up weekly or fortnightly tasks with instructions on due dates. As stated, we would encourage dialogue between students and/or parents/carers with teachers if guidance is needed or there are reasons why the return of work might be delayed.

We want students to have regular feedback on progress from staff and also encourage students to seek that if required. There can at least be real time communication and feedback via messages with Google classrooms. We will also be looking at the use of other tools within Glow over coming months.

**SQA Estimates**

As communicated earlier Teaching staff across the school continue to be involved in finalising their work on estimates for SQA candidates. I would refer parent/ carers to our earlier communication with regard to the SQA process which was posted on our website on 24 April 2020 and sent out by email. This work has now progressed to our rigorous internal moderation phase. Teaching taff are working hard to ensure all senior students’ work and progress are fully and professionally considered via the SQA process.

The SQA have also outlined answers to a number of [Frequently Asked Questions](https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/93797.9752.html).

**Please note:** The SQA recommends that all learners sign-up to **MySQA** to receive their results by text and/or email. Any learner who has previously signed up to receive their results through MySQA will continue to do so, and the SQA are asking those learners to review their profile to make sure their contact details are up to date.

**S1-3 Reports**

Reports are due for S1 and S3 this term. We have solved the technical issues and all staff are now able to write reports remotely.

Our revised Timeline

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year level** | **Report** | **Teacher Dates** | **QA Completed** | **Office** | **Parents** |
| **S1** | Interim | 11th – 29th May | 29th May | 1st June | 5th June |
| **S3** | Full | 11th – 29th May | 5th June | 8th June | 12th June |

**The S1 Report is an Interim report**. This is because staff have not seen students for some time and in many cases may only see them for one to two periods a week, limiting the amount of assessment material available. The interim report will however, give an indication of progress within the level and we plan to do a full report into next session based on revised report dates for all levels. We have changed the interim report categories and descriptors to include progress and have removed behaviour. The scale is indicated in the table below. While this is a snapshot report, we would stress that if this report causes you any concern you should contact your child’s Guidance teacher in the first instance

**The S3 Report is a 'full report with comments' format**. As such it is summative, and teachers have been requested to report on the Level that pupils have ***achieved***.

Please note that for the Progress category in both reports, 'Needs Improvement' is now replaced with 'Unsatisfactory' - see the key below

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Effort & Homework** |  | **Progress** |  |
| 1 | Excellent | 1 | Excellent |
| 2 | Good | 2 | Good |
| 3 | Inconsistent | 3 | Satisfactory |
| 4 | Needs Improvement | 4 | Unsatisfactory |

**Distance Learning**

Currently the challenge for the school is to try and avoid a merely passive process so that students receive some evaluation and feedback about their work. As stated in my last letter a number of parents have queried why we are not using virtual platforms such as Zoom or webinex which offers a webinar platform. As you may be aware there are security issues with these platforms and due to the potential child protections risks these platforms are not able to be used in virtual meetings or for more direct contact with young people within class or other student groups. We are hoping that there will be some policy changes around the use of video functionality within GLOW in the near future by the administrators and Scottish Government that may allow for more direct learning opportunities with staff to help motivate and engage students .The extended management team will continue to discuss the ongoing development of distance learning as we seek to offer the most stimulating and challenging learning experience our resources and technology are able to currently offer.

In coming weeks we hope to audit engagement and feedback within subject areas, survey all current end users on their experiences as well as set up a school group to look at ways of motivating and engaging young people. I will be looking for student help and parental input on this group via the Parent Association.

**Access to IT**

It is worth reiterating that if your child does not have a device or access to internet, please let us know as soon as possible by emailing: [penicuik\_hs@midlothian.gov.uk](mailto:penicuik_hs@midlothian.gov.uk). There is a facility to support homes through the loan of hardware via the digital learning team and we can help support that process. It may also be the case that you experience connectivity or equipment failure. If this causes your child or you stress please get in touch and we will try and help.

Finally, we would like to thank you for you on-going support and the positive messages many of you have sent. We trust as we start of ninth week of lockdown starts that you and your family remain safe, especially where you have vulnerable family members who require shielding. For those of you who are unwell or supporting unwell family members, we send our very best wishes for a speedy recovery. We know also that a number of families in the community have experienced the loss of a loved one at this time and we as a school community extend our sincere condolences on you loss.

Best Wishes

Craig Biddick and the Senior Management Team