

Dear Parent/Carer,

COVID-19 procedures

As we near the end of another busy week at Braes, it has again been encouraging to see our young people continue to demonstrate a very mature and sensible attitude in following COVID-19 procedures. Our in-school measures are designed to prevent the spread of COVID-19 should someone unknowingly be in school when they have COVID-19. Our greatest defence though, in the same way as other places where people gather such as restaurants or shops, is to ensure that no person comes into school if they, or anyone in their household is symptomatic. The support of parents/carers in following this message is greatly appreciated. Similarly, the support of parents/carers in ensuring young people bring a face covering to school is also appreciated. The vast majority of our young people are remembering to do this each day, and while we will always ensure each pupil has a face covering, it would be good to reduce the number of coverings being issued each week.

Senior Phase Pupils

I would also note the efforts at present of our senior phase pupils and the staff who are supporting them through the completion of SQA courses. There is no doubt that our young people and their teachers are operating in unprecedented circumstances just now in implementing the Alternative Certification Model. This approach, as outlined in previous communications, is predicated on grades being awarded to pupils on the basis of demonstrated attainment. We therefore need to provide our young people with appropriate opportunities to demonstrate their learning and progress, in line with SQA guidance for each course.

Even in 'normal' times, the summer term is an intense time for senior phase pupils, as they build towards what are mostly one-off examinations. However, we are very much aware that the current situation and the school experience young people have had this session, increases that intensity for all involved. We care deeply for our young people, and encouraging them, offering feedback on how they are progressing are key ingredients in making this situation work as well as it can for our pupils. In recent weeks, Cheryl Butler, from our Open Doors service, has put on sessions for young people about coping with the current situation for senior phase pupils. A flavour of the types of conversations Cheryl had with young people is available on our school YouTube channel using the link below:

[Cheryl Butler - Anxiety Q&A](#)

As always, our Pastoral Team and wider school staff are there to talk with young people about how they are doing just now, and our staff have engaged in different types of professional learning in relation to health and wellbeing, to be able to support our pupils.

There are also a number of other websites and apps our staff recommend for young people, noted below:

www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk

<http://breathingspace.scot>

<https://www.seemescotland.org/>

You can also download apps which can help:

<http://safespot.org.uk/the-app/> **SafeSpot** is an app designed to help young people improve their coping skills.

<http://chillpanda.co.uk/> Learn to relax, manage your worries and improve your wellbeing with **Chill Panda**.

<http://sam-app.org.uk/> **SAM App** provides anxiety management advice and strategies on your mobile.

Extra-curricular activities

A large part of supporting our young people in terms of their health and wellbeing comes from encouraging participation in school activities. At Braes we always encourage pupils to 'be part of it!' and the attached sporting and non-sporting extra-curricular activities lists give information to families about ways in which our young people can meet with friends in a non-classroom setting, and enjoy the relevant activity. I am grateful to staff for putting these activities on for our pupils.

Braes Bulletin

As well as the focus on learning, teaching and assessment, our school continues to be a vibrant and positive place, due to the efforts of our pupils and staff. Please click on the link below for the latest Braes Bulletin, capturing some of these moments.

Braes Bulletin

Finally, our thanks go to parents/carers for your support of the school and your young people. As a parent myself, I appreciate the demands and challenges as we support our young people through this time. I look forward to continuing what has already been a very productive summer term so far.

Yours faithfully,

Iain Livingstone