

Dear Parent/Carer,

Following the Scottish Government announcement on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2021, we were of course required to rapidly make plans for the new term. A version of this communication was subsequently issued to parents/carers at the end of last term. Following the further announcement made by the First Minister on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021, some amendments have been made to arrangements for the new term.

The key messages from the Scottish Government are:

- For the children of key workers schools will open as previously scheduled. They will also open as normal for the most vulnerable children.
- All teachers will also return to work as scheduled and as planned.
- For the majority of pupils, however, the holiday period is being extended until **11th January**.
- Starting on that date, learning will be online until at least **1<sup>st</sup> February**.

Since that point, the Scottish Government has issued further guidance for schools. This can be accessed via the link below.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-school-re-opening-arrangements-for-january-2021/pages/schools-opening-timeline/>

It is crucial that we maintain our focus on learning and teaching for young people during this time. Setting a routine, and providing reassurance as we normally do for our pupils, will be at the heart of our approach during this period of home learning.

### **Learning and Teaching**

Prior to the break, guidance was issued surrounding remote and online learning at Braes High School. Given the update by the First Minister on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January, please find some additional information in the form of a Q and A which should hopefully aid in helping you with any questions you may have.

#### What will the school day look like for my child?

We want your young person(s) to have as close to a 'normal' school experience as possible, and for this reason, we are asking that all pupils follow their usual school timetable. Work will be set for each lesson and teachers will either be delivering live interactions during these times, or be available for check-ins and feedback.

By 'virtually' attending all lessons, as they would if in they were in the building, it helps ensure routine, structure and normality for our young people. It also ensures that they are able to interact with their peers and take regular breaks, which is conducive to effective learning. Most importantly, it creates a healthier work-life balance for our young people, allowing them to switch off in the evenings and enjoy down-time with family.

We do not expect our young people to be online for fifty minutes every period of the school day, however, they will need to log-in at the start of each period in order to access relevant tasks and supports.

Period timings will be as follows for pupils in all year groups:

<b>Period 1</b>	9.00am – 9.50am
<b>Period 2</b>	9.50am – 10.40am
<b>Interval</b>	10.40am – 10.55am
<b>Period 3</b>	10.55am – 11.45am
<b>Period 4</b>	11.45am – 12.35pm
<b>Lunch</b>	12.35pm – 1.10pm
<b>Period 5</b>	1.10pm – 2.00pm
<b>Period 6</b>	2.00pm – 2.50pm
<b>Period 7</b>	2.50pm – 3.40pm

Where should they access lessons and resources?

Microsoft Teams will be the main platform for online learning. Show My Homework will continue to be used to provide an overview of work set for pupils in S1/2 Teams should be accessed by pupils in order to take part in live interactions and lessons. Pupils in the Senior Phase will access all work, resources and live interactions via their Microsoft Teams channels. All of our young people have been working on Teams since we returned in August, so this platform is familiar and easily accessible for them.

What support is on offer for my child?

As far as possible, class teachers will continue to teach your child(ren) as if they were in the classroom, so they will be available during class times to support your young person. However, as always, should you require more specific help, you can email the relevant Faculty Heads or, for pastoral matters, the relevant Pastoral Head or Link DHT using the addresses noted in this communication.

How often will my child interact with their teachers?

The authority have provided guidance, which can be accessed via the link below, which outlines as a minimum how often pupils will engage with their teachers.

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/fa/connectedfalkirk/expectations-for-blended-learning/>

However, our aim is to ensure that your child experiences as close to a normal school ‘day’ as possible. So, for example, if your S1 child usually has Maths period 2 on a Monday, then they would log into their Maths Team during this time. Their teacher will have set work for them and this will be supported either with a live interaction (such as a recorded demonstration, live lesson or personalised check-ins) or a member of the Maths team will be on hand to answer questions and support your young person(s) during this time.

Another example would be a Higher History pupil who has a double History lesson period 3 and 4 on a Wednesday. Again, they would be expected to be online in their History Team during this time. Their teacher could, for example, be live at the start to set up the lesson and tasks and then come back to your young person(s) after a period of time to check in, support or move the lesson on. Pupils may also be placed in online ‘groups’ in order to work together on a task, or they may be working through a recorded PowerPoint or past paper.

### What do I do if I need help with technology?

We have been working to ensure that no young person is without a device or connectivity and have provided one-to-one devices to lots of our young people in the Braes community. Connected Falkirk are supporting this to ensure every young person in Falkirk has their own iPad within the next few months. If you have any hardware related obstacles to young people accessing online learning then please contact their relevant Pastoral Head or our DHT Jillian Shaw via [jillian.shaw@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:jillian.shaw@falkirk.gov.uk)

### How can I help as a parent?

You can help support your child(ren) by encouraging them to attend all lessons and engage with the work set by their teachers. Where appropriate, sign-post your young person to online resources available. For example, this session, pupils and staff have been making use of the additional online resources provided by E-sgoil (<http://www.e-sgoil.com/>). While we would see resources produced on this website as complementary to the core offer from teachers, we have seen good examples of young people utilising this resource to augment their studies.

### How do I know if my child is on track?

Your young person(s) teacher will still have responsibility for your child and their class, and so will continue to deliver feedback in the same manner in which they would in the class. This could take the form of verbal feedback, written feedback on work and tasks completed and whole class feedback.

Our intention is still to host our online parents' evenings which will provide you with an update as to how your young person(s) is progressing within each of their courses. Likewise, tracking reports will continue to be issued as per the school calendar.

### Curricular Contacts

Mathematics – Mrs Simpson ([leanne.simpson@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:leanne.simpson@falkirk.gov.uk)) or Mrs Haggon ([claire.haggon@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:claire.haggon@falkirk.gov.uk))

English and Media – Mr Rooney ([mark.rooney@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:mark.rooney@falkirk.gov.uk))

Science – Mr McLean ([john.mclean@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:john.mclean@falkirk.gov.uk))

Humanities – Ms Malcolm ([fiona.malcolm@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:fiona.malcolm@falkirk.gov.uk))

Creative Arts – Mr Morris ([brian.morris@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:brian.morris@falkirk.gov.uk))

Health – Mr Yeates ([darren.yeates@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:darren.yeates@falkirk.gov.uk))

Modern Languages – Mrs Dunn ([susan.dunn@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:susan.dunn@falkirk.gov.uk))

Technology – Mr Vosser ([ian.vosser@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:ian.vosser@falkirk.gov.uk))

For more general enquiries about your young person(s) please use the Pastoral Head email addresses below.

## **SQA**

Our prelim diet was due to start on Monday the 18<sup>th</sup> of January. Given the further announcement on the 4<sup>th</sup> of January this will mean the prelims will not start as originally planned on the 18<sup>th</sup>. We will continue to consult with staff, pupils and parents throughout next week before issuing a provisional plan for moving forward with regards to SQA and prelims/assessments. Due to this change the timeline issued in the last communication before the Christmas break will also be adapted accordingly and re-issued once more details are known. As you will appreciate, this is a fluid situation and we will respond to further updates from the Scottish Government and SQA. We have been planning for a wide range of eventualities and will use the information from our consultations and experiences of last year to continue to move forward in a way that supports all Braes pupils.

Of course, it is crucial that young people in the senior phase continue to engage with their remote learning. As always, families can communicate directly with the relevant Faculty Heads in relation to any subject-specific curricular issues, and with Pastoral Heads for more general enquiries or support during this time.

## **Pastoral and Pupil Support**

The Pastoral Team, as with all other teaching staff, will be following their teaching timetable and will be available during scheduled PSE lessons to provide input to all pupils in the junior and senior school. Similarly, our Pupil Support staff will maintain input with our transitions groups during their timetabled periods.

Pupils are able to contact their Pastoral Head or Pupil Support Key Teacher through the chat function on Microsoft Teams and parents/carers can make contact with House Team, if required, using the following email addresses;

Campsie - Ms Jones (formerly Dempsey) [linda.jones@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:linda.jones@falkirk.gov.uk) / Mr Deane [kevin.deane@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:kevin.deane@falkirk.gov.uk)

Lomond - Mr Burns [michael.burns@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:michael.burns@falkirk.gov.uk) / Mrs White [janine.white@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:janine.white@falkirk.gov.uk)

Ochil - Mr Burnett [george.burnett@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:george.burnett@falkirk.gov.uk) / Mrs McIntyre [diane.mcintyre@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:diane.mcintyre@falkirk.gov.uk)

Pentland - Mrs Eckles [laura.eckles@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:laura.eckles@falkirk.gov.uk) / Miss King [lynsey.king@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:lynsey.king@falkirk.gov.uk)

Pupil Support – Mrs White [janine.white@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:janine.white@falkirk.gov.uk)

DHT Campsie – Miss Wilkinson [julie.wilkinson@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:julie.wilkinson@falkirk.gov.uk)

DHT Lomond – Mrs Shaw [jillian.shaw@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:jillian.shaw@falkirk.gov.uk)

DHT Ochil – Mr Smith [kevin.smith@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:kevin.smith@falkirk.gov.uk)

DHT Pentland – Ms Cotter [marjorie.cotter@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:marjorie.cotter@falkirk.gov.uk)

HT – Mr Livingstone [iain.livingstone@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:iain.livingstone@falkirk.gov.uk)

Cheryl Butler, our Pupil Support worker, will continue to make telephone contact with young people who access our Open Doors Listening Service. Young people can make contact with Cheryl through Microsoft Teams if required.

Support for Learning Assistants will offer support to key pupils with their learning throughout the period of blended learning.

### **School Transport**

School buses will run as normal during the period of pupils learning at home, to cater for pupils attending Hub Childcare.

Finally, despite the circumstances we are in, I would wish all Braes families the very best for 2021. Our school is a high achieving, high attaining school, with the emphasis firmly on developing young people as well rounded citizens. Our goal is to ensure that is preserved again this session. Clear communication between home and school is crucial to this. As ever, please do not hesitate to get in touch if there are any issues relating to your young person's education you wish to discuss. All the very best for the festive season.

Yours faithfully,

Iain Livingstone