



Education, Communities & Organisational Development

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Dear Parent/Carer

The start to 2021 has been far from normal for you or for ourselves with a new lockdown preventing the return to school as expected. Young people are at home now and after an extended holiday period we moved to remote learning. Our sincere thanks yet again for your patience and understanding as plans were shaped up and shared with you. As we approach the start of week 3 of remote learning, we hope that there is now an established routine in place. We meet with the Secondary Head Teachers regularly to align Remote Learning offers for equitable approach across our schools. Many practitioners in secondary continue to embrace pre-established online methods for Remote Learning, using functionality available within GLOW with Microsoft Teams and Google Classroom used across our schools. During our discussions with Head Teachers we can see the advances made from previous lockdown however we must also remember that we have only completed the second week of the latest period of remote learning.

For your information a range of Remote Learning approaches are being embraced to support all learners appropriate to age and stage while taking into account home circumstances and support available at home. This includes online learning, physical resource packs, paper-based resources, live learning and teaching, a range of check-ins with learners, pre-recorded learning sessions including voiceover PowerPoints, weekly learning grids, learning challenges and embracing other learning offers (e.g. Education Scotland, Scholar, e-Sgoil, BBC Scotland). This also follows from previous lockdown and feedback from our learners, parents/carers and schools through online surveys gathering information on their remote learning experience. In line with all guidance available including Trade Union advice, live lessons are being provided in a number of our schools by practitioners who are comfortable in doing so using all functionality available within GLOW. Other schools are embracing partnership live learning offers. All are mindful for balance of on-screen and off-screen time and need to vary approaches for pace and challenge, and meeting learning needs. We also have to take in to consideration the individual circumstances of our staff as they are delivering learning from their own homes. Although staff are working hard to deliver learning remotely, this is in no way a direct replacement for in-school learning and nor can it be. We are particularly pleased with the percentage of young people who are accessing remote learning, with numbers hugely increased since the previous lockdown and we thank you all for your support with this as we continue to monitor engagement and participation.

Support and guidance sources for Parents/Guardians/Learners

Digital Support Site – The website created to help parents/carers support learners in accessing Glow and staying safe online has recently been updated. The aim of this resource is help understand what Glow is and what it offers and how learners can access their learning in Microsoft Teams or Google Classroom.

<https://sites.google.com/my.glow.scot/moraydigitalschoolshub/glow/google-classroom>

Digital Support Web App – There is an app too and content on both the app and website are similar; however, they have been created in different formats to support different devices. The web app can be accessed on your mobile/tablet device by going to your web browser and pasting the following address into the browser – **mdltdigitaladvice.glideapp.io** Please note this is a web app and not available for download through the usual app stores.

Whatever stage your young person is at, you will no doubt have concerns and we totally appreciate this. For those in S1-3 we will continue to look at the offer being made so that key aspects of learning are covered to allow your children to progress in each subject area. We encourage you to continue to support your young person to access the work set for them and to regularly check that they are doing everything expected of them. Please look out too for other offers signposted by the school as they supplement and support the school offer.

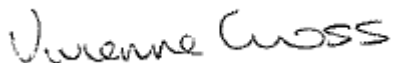
For those in the senior phase, there will be other concerns particularly around assessment and evidence for Scottish Qualification's Authority (SQA) examination and accreditation process. We regularly attend national meetings and have plans in place to support the moderation and verification stage which will be required once young people return to school. As and when the SQA release guidance along with key dates, we will ensure that you are fully informed of expectations. Assessment cannot be completed remotely however as soon as young people return to school we will make every effort to gather evidence to support their grades. In the meantime it is vitally important that set work is completed and that learning continues. The SQA are modifying course descriptors for each subject to take account of the learning time lost.

We totally appreciate the strain this has put on everyone, including many of our own staff who also juggle working from home whilst supporting their own children. Some of you will naturally be concerned that you are not able to help your children and if this is the case please do not hesitate to contact the school in the first instance. We are aware that some of you are concerned that there is too much work which is overwhelming for yourselves and your young people and for others that there is not enough and that they may fall behind. For a few, this lockdown is proving too difficult particularly if your own circumstances have changed. We fully understand each position and for our staff this is also a challenge as they try and support you all. Please be assured that we aim to strike the right balance. The wellbeing of young people is the most important thing and of course that of all the family and so contact the school to discuss your concerns or worries and they will do everything they can. Please don't feel too worried or pressured as we fully appreciate that you too may be juggling work and home responsibilities and perhaps other things too.

Throughout the ongoing pandemic, we will continue to work with you and take on board your individual circumstances. Like you, this is new to us and so sometimes we may not get it right, however we will continue to look for ways to support your young people in their learning as best we can.

None of us know how much longer this will go on for and we await announcements on any return to school. Please be assured that once we know what this will look like, we will be back in touch to keep you updated. In the meantime, please follow Scottish Government Guidance for lockdown and stay safe and well.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vivienne Cross". The script is cursive and fluid.

Vivienne Cross
Head of Education (Chief Education Officer)