



Kirkwall Grammar School

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Head Teacher: Mr D Hawkins

05/02/2021

Dear Parents and Carers.

I hope this update finds you all well. With the approaching February long weekend and staff In-Service day, I wanted to write and remind you of the dates KGS will be closed to pupils. KGS will be closed to pupils from Thursday February 11 and will reopen on Tuesday February 16.

I would like to remind all parents and carers to contact the school if you are having any issues with connectivity or with your IT equipment. As always, we will do all we can to try to help and support both you and your young people. As I indicated in my last update, we had a number of IT devices allocated to us to help support pupils with their home learning. Pupils who have been allocated a device or data package were identified through information which was provided by parental responses to the OIC parental survey on IT. Families were prioritised based on the information provided through that survey in consultation with the school.

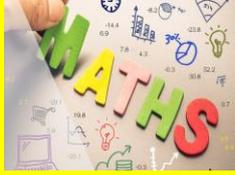
We want to support you as best we can and ensure that as many pupils as possible can access an appropriate device, for at least part of a day. We know that there are still families who would benefit from having increased IT provision at home. If you feel you need support with IT issues to support remote learning then please contact your child's Guidance Teachers or Year Head. As we continue with remote learning please remember that there is a Support Guide that will introduce you to the Digital platforms that your child will be using allowing you as parents/carers to support your child's learning at home available on the schools website or available to download [here](#).

After the February long weekend, we intend to offer a virtual parents' evening to our S4 and S5/6 parents and carers. The parents evening will be held online but due to the continuing Covid restrictions, the timing of the evening will be from 4 to 6pm. Details, instructions and dates for the parents' evenings will be sent out in the coming weeks by Mr Harvey, Depute Head Teacher.

After the First Minister's announcement earlier this week on the phased return of young people to schools from February 22, we are developing plans on that basis and await further details of the phased return as well as details on testing arrangements for staff and senior pupils. The Local Authority and school will continue to update you as information becomes available. I encourage all young people to continue to focus on their learning during this challenging time.

This does of course mean that most pupils will continue with their remote learning. For pupils in S1 and S2, we have added a rota of subjects to the core provision of Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing. The rota will be published on the KGS website every week, together with links to further learning activities.

The rota for our S1 and S2 pupils for next week is shown below.

Week 1				
Monday 8 th February	Tuesday 9 th February	Wednesday 10 th February	Thursday 11 th February	Friday 12 th February
				
<p>Social Subjects</p> 				

We recognise the need for our S1/S2 pupils to have access to all their subjects as we move forward. The rota will continue to provide a core provision and allow the other subjects that were optional to become part of the learning offer.

Once again, I would like to gently remind all key worker parents and carers who require childcare / supervision in school that use of this service should be as a necessity in order to reduce the possibility of spread of infection. The Coronavirus (COVID-19): school re-opening arrangements for January 2021 under Support for Children of Keyworkers does ask 'if it is possible for children to be at home during this exceptional period, until schools reopen to them, then they should be'. The present structure at KGS can only be sustained if parents/carers who have been assigned keyworker status ensure that they only make use of this provision when they are working and where they have no other reasonable alternative. Guidance teachers continue to contact other parents and carers to discuss any extra needs their young people may have.

We know only too well that motivating your children to work online can be very difficult and frustrating. Try and remember to not worry too much about this. When we see pupils not engaging or failing to register, we will contact them and gently remind them of the importance of their school work and also discuss any issues or barriers they may be experiencing.

Planning for the senior phase options are well under way. The intention is to open the options process on Tuesday February 16, with a closing date in mid March. Further information will be sent to you by Mr Ewing nearer the time.

Once again, I would like to thank you for your patience and understanding through what continues to be a difficult and frustrating time. Should you have any questions or queries, please do not hesitate to contact your child's Guidance teacher and / or year head.

I very much look forward to welcoming your children and young people back to KGS as soon as we are allowed to do so.

All the very best to you and your family

Stay home and stay safe.

Don Hawkins
Head Teacher

working together to raise aspirations and attainment by achieving excellence and equity