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Contact: Mr J Lothian

Our ref: JL/MM

Your ref:

Date: 8th May 2020

Parent / Carer

Dear Parent/ Carer

I sincerely hope that this letter finds you safe and well.

The purpose of this communication is to give parents and young people within the Perth Academy community a weekly update.

As stated in my previous communication, our collective priority as a wider community of Perth Academy remains the safety and wellbeing of our young people. Continuing with learning at this time is of course important as part of a daily and weekly routine, but we appreciate it may not have the same priority at this time and that families and young people will require flexibility, understanding and support.

We are currently monitoring and tracking learner engagement with our online offer. We do this to ensure that we can provide support to those young people who are experiencing barriers with connectivity. We will be contacting families to see where we can assist, please be assured that if we get in touch it will be with a sensitive and supportive approach.

You will find this week's update below. I want to highlight the laptop initiative being led by our Parent Council. While we are working hard to ensure equity of access, there remain some young people within our community who are unable to access connectivity to their online learning. There are others, particularly in the Senior Phase, who have devices, such as phones, which provide connectivity but are unsuitable for supporting sustained or extended learning activities. The laptop initiative aims to provide some refurbished laptops to meet this need. We are very grateful for their and your support at this time, please help if you can.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact us at perthacademy@pkc.gov.uk if you have any queries whatsoever.

Best wishes from my house to your house.

Johnny Lothian
Rector

Rector's Update Thursday 7th May

Online learning

S3-5 have moved on to their subjects and studies for next year. There are still a few subject changes and tweaks being made for individual pupils but on the whole, this has gone extremely smoothly. Any queries about new courses/subjects should be made to perthacademy@pkc.gov.uk

Having listened to learner feedback from the survey last term we have made some changes to our approaches:

- We have a dedicated member of staff supporting our staff with online learning to ensure we are moving to a consistency of approach and providing support and training
- We have agreed a whole school approach to the use of Microsoft Teams and within this a consistent approach to the communication within the teams and the issuing of work through the assignments section (the current S1 and S2 will move to all classes on Teams in the same way when the timetable changes for them on 1 June)
- We have asked all teaching staff to ensure their pupils know when and how they can contact teachers to ask questions
- We have had our first successful live interactive sessions in some subjects are working with staff to move to providing more interactive learning opportunities
- We have a twitter account solely to highlight online learning resources and activities [@perthonline](https://twitter.com/perthonline)

We will be coming out to you in the form of a short online survey to ask for feedback from you as parents at the end of next week.

Supporting our community – stay connected

Our community relies on us staying connected. This is a message that I would like you to reiterate with our young people. Connection facilitates mutual support. Please encourage them to stay connected with their friends via messages, calls and video conversations.

Mrs Birrell and the support team have been busy with transition meetings and finalising course choices for the senior phase this week. To support our young people to access learning online, we have delivered 35 tablets/iPad and hotspots to some of our young people. If any young person needs to borrow a device, please contact PerthAcademy@pkc.gov.uk. Please take time to read about the Parent Council "Laptops for Learning" initiative below, which is being launched this weekend.

We are also aware that some young people may require access to stationery. We have arranged through some of our partners to host supplies of free resources should any young people from Perth Academy require them.

Letham4All, The Spar in Scone and Tesco Metro, South Street, Perth have all agreed to host a box of pens, pencils, paper, sharpeners, coloured pencils and erasers for any young people from Perth Academy to access what they need. We expect these to be established from Monday 11th May, keep an eye on our twitter feed [@PerthAcademy](https://twitter.com/PerthAcademy) for updates.

The wellbeing of our community is paramount, and it is important to look after ourselves and each other. Beginning next week, there will be a weekly Health and Wellbeing challenge communicated to young people via their Assembly Teams and our social media channels, focusing on "I practise self-care", with all departments offering an activity. Everybody is welcome to participate.

Parent Council LAPTOPS FOR LEARNING - Could you Help?

You could make a real difference to a child with no access to IT for home learning.

Many of our Perth Academy pupils have limited or no access to online learning and because of this we have set up a "Laptops for Learning" initiative to urgently ensure that all our children can have access to a computer and GLOW (Scotland's Education Intranet).

We are urgently seeking donations of laptops.

- A laptop of less than 2 years old can be fully cleaned and updated.
- A laptop of less than 4 years old can be refurbished.
- A laptop of 5 years old could be refurbished or potentially recycled to help make a usable laptop.

If you have any unused laptops that you could donate, please message us to arrange drop offs or collection.

If you know of companies that may have any surplus laptops, please forward on our details. With your help we are hoping to urgently provide 20 laptops or more.

Laptops can be collected locally (email- pcperthacademy@gmail.com to arrange) or there is a dedicated **local drop off point at Letham Community Hub, Tweedsmuir Road, Perth PH1 2HJ**

Support can also be given through the Just Giving Page set up specifically for this project <https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/laptops-for-learning>

The funding will be used to refurbish and supply laptops and provide internet access to those most in need.

Thank you for your time and support.

Perth Academy Parent Council

Term 4 – what’s coming up?

May

- May 8th – May Day holiday
- May 22nd – Inservice Day for teaching staff
- Over May - Head prefect application process including applications, video presentation and virtual interview. Dates to be confirmed.

June

- June 1st – Change of timetable – All year groups will be moved into new classes and courses through online platforms.
- June 30th - Perth Academy Annual Awards – we will be organising our awards and communicating with the award winners individually. We aim to develop an online / video communication to share the individual and group successes of the year and we will publish lists of winners.

Course Choice

The course choice process has gone relatively smoothly, given the unexpected hurdles we have had to overcome. Pupils should now be set up in their new Teams. Any pupil who has course choice issues should either contact their Guidance teacher or Mr Ross directly via GLOW.

In S6, all pupils taking a campus course at another school should be able to access work. Again, contact Mr Ross, if there are any issues.

Pupils taking a college course next session must complete an application form and forward it to their Guidance teacher. The link to the form is in the course choice section of the school website. College staff are conducting interviews at this time, and pupils who have already submitted forms should hear from the college soon.

And finally, any S6 pupil considering a YASS course next year can get the relevant information from their Guidance teacher.

SQA update – teacher estimates

I wrote to all S4-6 parents last week to offer an SQA update. This is available on our website. As there are no SQA exams this year, the estimated grade sent to SQA by the school will be the significant factor in the award process. The estimates we send to the SQA this session on the 29th May will be subject to SQA validation and moderation processes. Therefore, Perth & Kinross Council cannot and will not make estimated grades available to pupils or parents and carers until some point after the results are announced on 4 August.

Supporting Parents

Last week, the Scottish Government issued new guidance for staff and parents in relation to learning during this term. Within this documentation there were some helpful resources and suggestions for parents which I link below.

<https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/learning-at-home/covid19/be-at-the-heart-of-your-child-s-learning-during-covid-19/>