

Rector's Update
3rd April 2020



Welcome to the Rector's update at the end of term 3 and after two weeks of exclusively virtual and online learning at Perth Academy. It is my intention to communicate an update for parents at the end of each week when we return in term 4.

I hope you are well and putting your health first.

Perth Academy staff and partners have continued to work hard throughout this difficult time, and I want to begin this update by thanking staff for their dedication to support our children and families. It has been a great team effort. I am extremely grateful and proud to be part of the Perth Academy community at this time.

S6 Leavers

School life as we know it for S6 students at Perth Academy came to a premature end on Friday 20th March. I asked of our departing S6, and our departing S5 and S4 students, that the day be remembered as a happy and memorable day. Our leavers have been a credit to our school community and we will really miss seeing them each day.

We encourage the Perth Academy diaspora stay in contact and keep us posted on next steps in life, learning and work. If any of our leavers require support with applications, UCAS or just want to chat please reach out to Mrs. Birrell or the Guidance Team.

We aim in time that we can reconvene with our leavers and celebrate their contribution to the school in a fit and proper way.



Home and Online Learning

We have now entered an unexpected phase of Perth Academy learning provision, that of **universal** online learning. A top priority in the first weeks has been ensuring young people can continue their learning at home. We aim to provide purposeful learning and a relevant focus for our learners at this time, allowing home learning to fit a routine that suits the family. Please bear with us as we make adjustments and improvements. We are aware that there are a range of learning platforms in use, requiring flexibility for our learners. We have provided what we feel to be a reasonable level of activity and expectations, but we are also aware that some young people may feel overwhelmed and unable to keep on top of things at this time, particularly with the reality of a change in home circumstances and routines during this lockdown. We want to work with you as we move forwards and require your feedback now more than ever.

Mrs. Paul has been coordinating the online offer and has helpfully put together some guidance on our website.

<http://manage.appscentral.co.uk/uploads/client/documents/5074/c264f1fb7cdbc7827074ca0657c67d82.pdf#>

Staff and staffing

This has been a steep learning curve for staff and a test of our resilience at times of change. The Perth Academy staff have responded superbly in my opinion. Our teams are communicating regularly and supporting one another to ensure that we continue to secure the very best outcomes for young people and families.

We have also been supporting young people who don't have access to IT by lending some tablets. If any pupils, parents or carers have any issues with their IT please get in touch with us perthacademy@pkc.gov.uk

Along with continuing to prioritise the learning and support for families, we are also focusing efforts on planning for the terms ahead. This week we are interviewing for teachers in History and English. I want to thank John Whyte, History teacher at Perth Academy who retires today, 3rd April 2020. John is a real gentleman and has given tremendous service to our school since 1998. We will miss him.



Twitter

There has been a great deal of activity on twitter over the past few weeks. If you haven't already been following or contributing to the community chatter please feel free to do so.

We have three main twitter channels, many of our departments also use this format for sharing messages. Please share your home learning experience **#learnathomePA**

@Perth Academy	School twitter feed
@PerthOnline	Online Learning advice, recommendations and RTs
@PerthWellbeing	Wellbeing advice, recommendations and RTs

Parents and Carers

We have been overwhelmed by the kind words that we have received from parents and carers over the past few weeks in support of our activity. I have shared these with our staff who are very appreciative.

We have aimed to communicate to parents and carers as regularly as possible throughout this time. A very good source of information is the PKC Education link for Coronavirus updates below

<https://www.pkc.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Mrs. Birrell is coordinating our support and welfare approaches at this time.

The welfare of those within our school community is our priority. During the period of school closure, young people and families can access supports to ensure their safety and welfare. Given the unsettling nature of the current situation, we recognise that some young people will significantly benefit from being in touch with school beyond the home learning contacts. We issued an update to parents earlier this week, link below.

<http://manage.appscentral.co.uk/uploads/client/documents/5074/08e0c4957f308e37e3e143fef960470.pdf>

SQA

We are aware of and fully understand the concerns and anxiety the current situation is causing for both families and pupils and we are monitoring the situation closely. We are following all the advice provided by Public Health Scotland, the Scottish Government and the SQA and any decisions we take will be based on the latest advice from them.

Here is the most up to date information from SQA, issued on 2/04/20

https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/020420-SQA-NQ2020-Parent-Carer-covid-19-FAQ.pdf

Extended Learning & Achievement Visit 11th and 12th March (ELAV)

In the midst of the recent tumult our visit by a review team led by Service Managers and Quality Improvement Officers from Perth & Kinross Council Education and Children's Services and involving colleagues from within the Tayside Regional Collaborative.

The purpose of the review was to scrutinise the school's own self-evaluation by triangulating evidence from data, samples of work and learners' profile: classroom observations; discussions with arrange of stakeholders including SMT, staff, parents and learners.

Our visitors reported on our very positive ethos, the quality of relationships and how impressed they were with our excellent young people who display real pride in their school. We have been given some excellent feedback on our work and improvement activity and we are confident in our capacity

to improve and take our school forward. A full ELAV report will be made available later in the calendar year.

I wish you and your family a safe and restful break over Easter. While it will be under unusual circumstances, we all require some down time after what has been one of the most challenging terms we have faced as a school community. We remain committed to ensuring that every young person at Perth Academy is supported to achieve their goals and aspirations. Stay safe. Stay well.

Best Wishes

Johnny Lothian
Rector