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Contact: Mr J Lothian

Our ref: JL/MM

Your ref:

Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> 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 at this time.

I remind parents that we are using a range of digital learning platforms currently. Primarily this means Microsoft Teams and Show My Homework (recently renamed Satchel One). It may be that your child is working across both platforms and it is worth checking this out with them. When we move the S1 & S2 year groups up on 1<sup>st</sup> June we will be moving to a universal Microsoft Teams platform for all learning.

I remind you also that we are tracking and monitoring the extent of our learner online engagement. The purpose of this is to do our best to ensure that where barriers exist, we can work with families to reduce them if we can. If we contact you in relation to your child's engagement with their learning, it will always be well intentioned and take cognisance of the challenging circumstances that families are facing at this time. We have asked that young people do their best at this time. This tracking helped us this week to communicate encouragement and recognition to our learners.

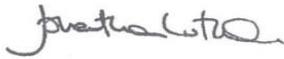
You will find this week's update below. I want to once again highlight the laptop initiative being led by our Parent Council. While we are working hard to ensure equity of access, there remain some young people within our community who are unable to access connectivity to their online learning. There 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.

Following the First Minister's latest announcements around the timescales and route map to schools reopening, we are working with Perth & Kinross Council and our staff to make preparations for this happening on 11<sup>th</sup> August. We will keep you informed. I have included a useful link for information relating to the re-opening of schools at the very end of this communication.

We launch our virtual transition programme on Monday for the P7s that are heading our way. We are really looking forward to our new students joining us, although we appreciate that this transition, more than ever, represents a change that contains much uncertainty and perhaps some anxiety.

Our parent survey is still open, details below. As always, please do not hesitate to contact us at [perthacademy@pkc.gov.uk](mailto:perthacademy@pkc.gov.uk) if you have any queries whatsoever.

Best wishes from my house to your house.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Johnny Lothian', written in a cursive style.

Johnny Lothian  
Rector

## **Rector's Update Friday 22nd May**

### **Online learning**

We have seen great levels of engagement and some fantastic pieces of work being submitted across the school this week.

The leadership team have been working with staff this week to put protocols together for online learning. These will be shared with pupils via Teams and with parents via the school website shortly. These protocols will help all members of our learning community to understand what is expected and clarify how we ensure safeguarding when working together online.

We are also developing a parent resource pack of information we think will be useful for supporting young people with their learning on Microsoft Teams.

As a reminder, 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, please be aware that until that time, some classes are still using Show My Homework/Satchel One)
- We have asked all teaching staff to ensure their pupils know when and how they can contact teachers to ask questions
- We have had successful live interactive sessions in some subjects who 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](#)

### **Parent Online Learning Survey**

We have received over two hundred responses to our survey so far. I would like to express my gratitude for the many messages of solidarity and support that you have sent us through this survey which we have shared with staff. We would really like to hear from you as to how you as parents feel the learning is going, Please complete a short survey [here](#)

### **Supporting our community – staying 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 again this week connecting with learners and families. If any young person needs to borrow a device or laptop in order to stay connected with their learning, please contact [PerthAcademy@pkc.gov.uk](mailto:PerthAcademy@pkc.gov.uk)

We have teamed up with some local partners who are keeping a box of stationery resources on our behalf. These are free to Perth Academy students, just ask! Resources available at Tesco, South street, Letham4All (Letham Centre) and Spar, Scone. Please take what you need.

## **Parent Council LAPTOPS FOR LEARNING - Can 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- [pccperthacademy@gmail.com](mailto:pccperthacademy@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**

- Over May - Head prefect application process including applications, video presentation and virtual interview. Dates to be confirmed.

#### **June**

- June 1<sup>st</sup> – Change of timetable – S1&2 classes will be moved into new classes and courses through online platforms. Letter to S1 and 2 parents week beginning 25<sup>th</sup> May containing details.
- June 30<sup>th</sup> - Perth Academy Annual Awards – we will be organising our awards and communicating with the award winners individually. We are developing an online / video communication to share the individual and group successes of the year and we will publish lists of winners.

### **Supporting Parents**

This week, the First Minister outlined her roadmap for phased recovery. I attach a link which might be useful for parents and carers in terms of what this plan means for you.

<https://www.parentclub.scot/articles/reopening-schools>