

Dear Parent/Carer

Apologies for length of my letter but as it is the end of session and my last formal communication, I did want to thank stakeholders and highlight some school news.

When we started this session there was no way of foreseeing the very difficult situation that would arise from the Covid 19 pandemic. As the first global pandemic for over 100 years this new Coronavirus has had a major impact of all areas of life, resulting in major economic pain and had a tragic impact on many families, including within our own school community.

In educational terms we have had to be very proactive right from the start and like all schools have tried to put in a viable digital learning platform that would help mitigate the loss of face to face teaching. This has had a positive impact on staff skills and knowledge in relation to digital learning and will benefit us longer term in relation to flexible learning plans in and out of school. We know that further promised developments in Google classrooms such as the use of live videos will enable even better learning through the digital approach.

We know that home learning using digital tools such as Google classrooms on Glow has been positive for many families but for others it has been difficult due to a range of factors that we fully understand and have tried where possible to mitigate.

As we near the end of session, I want to sincerely thank all parents and carers for their hard work and resilience in supporting their children's learning no matter the difficulty and stresses. Dealing with the disrupted learning situation has had to be about a partnership between school and home. I think the response of parents to the crisis has been courageous and in many cases has meant the possible gaps in learning have been reduced and can be managed when the young people return to school. I hope that the coming summer break will allow you to re-energise and give you more time both as a family but also personally.

I also want to acknowledge the effort staff members have made running the digital learning classrooms they have used to deliver learning and feedback or as workers in our office or other support roles. All staff, in numerous ways have been involved and committed to following up learning and welfare issues. In particular, I would note the work of our dedicated, 14 member strong contact team of Guidance and teaching staff who checked on the progress and health and wellbeing of all our young people during the crisis and took action when required to support families.

Working digitally with our students has not always been easy for staff as many have had to; juggle their own family commitments, deal with illness, family bereavement and the continuing uncertainty of the changing lockdown rules. All staff are fully committed to welcoming your children back into a safe learning environment at school in August and working to ensure that students feel safe, secure and confident about closing any gaps as a result of time away from direct schooling.

As you will be aware, there is still some uncertainty around the return to school but please be assured we are ready and willing to return to full time teaching again or to run the blended

learning option as required and in line with the prevailing health advice. It will be important that the learning community; staff, student and parents act within any revised guidance to ensure everyone's safety and this will be clearly spelt out to all young people on their return to school.

When we get back into school we will be ensuring a positive narrative and while we will be conscious of analysing and working on closing any gaps in learning or issues with young peoples' health and wellbeing our prevailing messages will be about; nurturing and resilience, building confidence and positivity and looking to the future.

During lockdown and in the face of some underlying inequalities we have tried to focus on small gains and successes within areas but when we return as a full community we will be looking at how we celebrate achievement as a school for both S1-3 and Senior phase students. Many young people have met the challenge of the situation head on and there are many examples of very positive engagement, achievement and success across all levels. We will bring forward more information about our plans in August including when we might hold the postponed Senior Prizegiving from this session.

There are a few staff changes for me to communicate for next session:

Farewells:

In Art, we say farewell to both Ms Zoe Statham and Ms Catriona Simpson who are leaving at the completion of their probation year. I would like to thank them for all their work and commitment to the young people they have taught this session and wish them well for the future.

In the Science Department Mrs Sam Cochrane who taught Science and Biology will leave us at the end of term. I would like to thank her for her commitment to the young people taught and the impact she has had on them as learners.

I would also like to take this opportunity to wish Ms Suzy McLennan who works both in Art and is a PT Guidance, all the best as she will go on maternity leave soon after the start of the new session.

We have also made a range of new appointments:

In Art we welcome Ms Amy Collop who will work part time in the Art Department and Ms Nicola Keir who will take up a fulltime appointment in August 2020.

In Music we welcome Ms Ella Vogiatzaki who will cover for Mrs McIntosh who is on maternity leave.

We are in the process of developing a behaviour support / learning hub in the school and have appointed Ms Kat Brack and Ms Shannon MacDonald as Teachers of Behaviour support. Ms Macdonald will also work in the English Department part time. They will both start in August.

We also welcome three newly qualified probationer Teachers into the school in August: Ms Samantha Preedy in Physics, Ms Shannon McGurk in Biology and Ms Katy Hill in Mathematics.

Mr Peter Jeans has now left our PE department, after a period of secondment to St David's, to take up a full time position with them and we are pleased to appoint Mr Luke Witton who was covering his post to a permanent position.

In Science, Mr Dave Scott who has been on leave last session has resigned.

Ms Helen Slaney will be staying on as a youth worker for now and will be joined by Ms Aleksandra Finnigan who is returning from Maternity leave in August to work part time.

Further, I am pleased to announce some appointments in the Guidance area:

Acting PT Teacher of Guidance - Maternity cover for Ms McLennan will be Mrs Leigh Wood who also teaches in Home Economics. I have also created a fixed term PT Guidance post which will focus on supporting our most vulnerable and support Inclusion and this will be taken up by Mr Stephen Milligen who also teaches in English.

I am also pleased to report that Ms Laura Graham who teaches RMPS will become an Associate in Guidance and will work to support LGBT+ students within an agreed time allowance.

Our staffing overall this year has been enhanced and we look forward to the impact of the new staff and posts into next session.

Finally, I would like to say thank you once again for your support of the staff and school over the session. I will be in touch before the start of the new session once we know what the re-opening will look like and how it will affect you and your child. I hope that you and your family all have a safe and happy summer break

My very best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Craig Biddick', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Craig Biddick

Head Teacher – Acting

