



15 January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

Well, week one of Lockdown 2 seems to have gone very quickly here and I hope that it has been a positive experience for you while your child has been Learning@Home. I will continue to write each week to give you updates but do please get in touch with any queries or issues. Your child's Pupil Support Leader is always your first point of contact but our website also holds lots of information about both learning and support and gives direct access to Mrs McGregor, our Pupil Support Officer. The website also gives direct access to a feedback button but contact with the school office is always welcome too.

Parent and Carer Council

It was really good to see so many parents at our Parent and Carer Council meeting on Monday. This is certainly one positive change to our way of working, with far more parents and carers able to join an online meeting. The issues raised can be seen in their minutes but are also addressed in my update below.

Learning@Home

We have had really positive first week Learning@Home with increased student engagement, lots of nice feedback and amazing upskilled staff, some of whom were not around for the first lockdown and are doing an incredible job catching up.

As you will have now seen from the guidance all students are to be offered a combination of what is outlined below.

- providing learning tasks and resources on-line
- providing physical copies of learning resources
- recorded learning which learners can access flexibly
- live learning/check-ins

Every child will have regular access to a teacher, with set times during the week when teachers or other staff will check-in to provide support with learning, provide feedback or check-in with pupils (classes, groups or individuals) regarding their Health & Wellbeing.

This week the learning tasks for S1 and S2 were available on the website but from next week these will be provided through Teams which will include asynchronous learning. Support with learning and feedback will also be provided through Teams and we are currently discussing the best model for weekly check in of groups which we very much hope to make synchronous, where possible.

Although parents and carers have been very positive about the 4 blocks of learning for S1 and S2 which they feel are manageable for both our young people and their families, there was

also a request for some extension work. This can now be accessed through our website. With regard to Maths, students have been allocated Teams with the appropriate level of work.

We have received some questions about use of the chat function in Teams. Where the lesson is synchronous, students can use this function. Where the lesson or learning is asynchronous, students should ask questions in the post function or support channel if this has been set up. For all students, if they are embarrassed about asking a question through Teams, they can email their teacher directly but must use their school email address to do this.

Whatever stage your child is at, and whether you think they are working too little or too much the guidance below will hopefully help in your conversations with them.

Students in S1-3 should engage in 15 – 20 hours of learning a week.

Students in S4-6 should engage in 20 – 25 hours of learning a week.

And lastly, do please remind them to register through our website each morning so that we can track their engagement and contact you when necessary.

Tynecastle Hub

Our THS Hub continued to support the children of key workers and other students who require this additional support this week. Do please let your child's Pupil Support Leader know if a place is no longer required or your child is going to be absent so that we can amend our staffing accordingly. As you know, working from home where possible is what the Scottish Government is asking all staff to do and having this information in plenty of time helps me to ensure the safety of our staff.

S3 Parents' Night

I have been really pleased to hear that this system has been working much better across the city this week and it would appear that glitches with both the system and capacity have been ironed out. We have however built in an extra minute between appointments to allow staff to either make a telephone call or send an emailed update if the connection fails. Appointments open on Monday at 7 pm with Parents' Night taking place on Thursday 21 January.

Support for Health and Wellbeing

Support for the health and wellbeing for our students and staff underpins everything that we are doing and must always be the priority as we work our way through this second lockdown. You will have seen the support on offer through our PE department for physical activity and health and we would appreciate you encouraging your child to engage in this. With regard to mental health and wellbeing please find updates below:

Place2Be - Students are still able to book Place2Talk appointments digitally. This will be relaunched by email / via KA on 22/1 and on the website. All students can fill in the form on the Tynecastle website (Student>Place2Be>appointment). Students in S3-S6 can access the form via the Place2Be tab on their school iPads.

Peer Support Lunchtime Club for S1/2 – WE are delighted to launch this new initiative which will be extended to other year groups if there is interest. Please see below for joining details: *Are you struggling with online learning or lockdown boredom? Why not join the Lockdown Lunch Teams chats on a Tuesday or Thursday lunchtime? Bring your lunch, share lockdown*

survival tips, or just come for a chat. Email Mr Thom(jamie.thom@tynecastle.edin.sch.uk) to be added to the Teams chat.

Extra-curricular

DoE – check- ins will continue for students who are enrolled for DoE and resources will be available.

Tynecastle Choir – choir will continue online so do please come along. Mrs Paterson is very keen to see you.

Tyne to Write – this new initiative for creative writing for S1 and S2 is being launched by Mr Thom and the English faculty. Again, please find joining details below:

Would you like to join the greatest online creative writing club ever: Tyne to write? Want to share some of your writing with the school in your own anthology of writing? Would you like to learn from special celebrity guest writers? Email Mr Thom (Jamie.Thom@tynecastle.edin.sch.uk) to be added to the Teams channel. Everyone is very welcome, and anyone can be a writer! Mr Thom.

I must apologise that this letter has become so long but I was really keen to provide updates to questions posed on Monday and as usual, there is just so much to share.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all your support this week. I do hope that you and your family have a restful weekend. I do not underestimate how demanding it is to try and keep your child motivated and engaged while doing your own job too. Luckily, I am not working from home every day!

And lastly, please do take care, stay connected and most importantly, stay safe.

Yours sincerely,



Hazel Kinnear
Head Teacher

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