

Dear parent/carer

As time marches quickly on and we are about to enter week nine of lockdown I am writing to you with information about moving pupils to the next stage in their learning. Effectively this means that from Tuesday 26th May, they are moving up a year. Before I go into some of the detail about how this will take place I firstly need to make you aware of some issues related to subject choice for pupils in S4, 5, and 6.

As you are all aware, life has changed considerably over the last couple of months for all of us. School is probably one example where this change has been most apparent and drastic. Pupils, parents and staff have all had to quickly learn new ways of working to support our young people to continue to make progress with their education and there is no doubt this has been very challenging. At the moment, we have no idea when pupils will return to school or what the arrangements for that return might look like. However, it is very unlikely that when a return happens it will be to school as we knew it. We will return to a new definition of normal.

With that in mind, we are moving pupils forward into the subjects that they have chosen for next year with some exceptions. Classes are always subject to change depending upon viability which is normally determined by pupil choice or staff availability. As a result, the following subjects will now not run next year due to low pupil uptake:

- S4 Accounting
- S4 Spanish
- S5/6 Higher Design and Manufacture

Pupils in S4 will automatically be enrolled in their reserve choice subject whilst pupils in S5 will be asked to select a new option.

Sadly, as a result of staffing and resourcing requirements, we have had to make the very difficult decision to remove Drama from our school curriculum for the time being. Over the next session, pupils in S2 who would normally have studied Drama will receive additional lessons in literacy and numeracy pending a further review of our whole curriculum next session. Pupils moving into S3 and S4 who have opted for Drama will be allocated their reserve options. Pupils moving into S5/6 will be asked to select another option from our curriculum.

Furthermore, at this time, and as a direct result of the Covid-19 crisis, we do not know if senior pupils will have the option to study courses at other schools via our normal consortia arrangements. As a result we have asked all senior pupils to select courses available in Kilsyth Academy. We understand that this will be difficult and disappointing for some pupils however, at the moment I believe it is prudent for us to plan on the basis that consortia will not run as normal. Should this change we will of course review pupil options as appropriate. For some pupils in S6, the option of independently studying Open University modules via the Young Applicants Scotland Scheme (YASS), might be an alternative option and we will provide information about the vast range of modules available.

Following feedback from pupils, parents and staff we have taken the decision to try to streamline our online offering to make it easier, and provide more flexibility for everyone to plan their week. From next week, all pupils will be put into MS Teams for each subject they are taking. Currently, some teachers and pupils are already using MS Teams for some subjects but from next week this will apply to all. Work will be issued weekly for each subject on the day detailed on the attached schedule. We would ask all pupils to access MS Teams via their GLOW accounts to access work, materials, resources, and links as well as to submit some work and communicate with teachers. This is, in effect the online

'classroom'. Teachers may still use Show My Homework to issue tasks but these will signpost pupils to login to MS Teams to access the work.

Pupils will be added to MS Teams based upon their selected options earlier in the year. Where a pupil thinks they have not been included in a Team for a subject they have chosen or, alternatively are included in a Team for a subject they didn't select they should contact their Pupil Support teacher online in the first instance.

I do understand some of the challenges pupils face in learning from home and these can vary greatly. We only ask that pupils make every effort to attempt and complete work as best they can. I recognise that there will be times that this is not possible for a number of reasons and do not want pupils to feel anxious or stressed by the work set. Pupils can contact teachers directly to ask for help with tasks and I would encourage them to do so.

As always, I hope you are all safe and well.

Yours faithfully