

# **General School information on managing Covid-19**

The front page of our school website has a link to information relating to COVID-19.

## **Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April – Holidays 12.50pm!**

### **SQA Update**

Last night the SQA put out an interim update on how estimate grades will be produced.

I include below the link which takes you into the appropriate page of the SQA website for pupils, parents and carers.

[https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files\\_ccc/020420-SQA-NQ2020-Parent-Carer-covid-19-FAQ.pdf](https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/020420-SQA-NQ2020-Parent-Carer-covid-19-FAQ.pdf)

We still await further details on the exact process of creating and compiling the estimate grades. Until we have this detail, we cannot start the process so please do not contact teachers or the school at this time.

All pupils in Scotland are in the same position with this so do not worry.

The City of Edinburgh have produced a letter to complement the SQA update.

It is on our website in the City of Edinburgh – Edinburgh Learns page of the Coronavirus page.

### **Holidays!!!**

School breaks for Easter Holidays today - at 12.50pm!!

Although we are not having a traditional end of term, it is the end of term and we are on holiday until Tuesday 21st April.

I think we are all desperately in need of a break and that all schoolwork, communications and home study should cease to allow us all to get that break.

So, by 12.50pm today at the very latest, pupils should switch off computers and start their holiday.

I will 'speak' to you all on the morning of Tuesday 21st April - first day of the summer term!

Take care and have as great a holiday as you can!

Mr Dempster  
Head Teacher

## **Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March**

Once again thank you all for all your incredible work in week 1 of the school closure.

This week will hopefully be a bit less frantic and will see us get into more of a routine.

It is important that we settle into some sort of routine and that pupils and teachers get on with the business of *some* Home Study. I say *some* because as important home study is, I do not want it getting out of hand.

Home study will never be a substitute for proper school but as said we will all find our way with it as time progresses. I want to reassure you and our pupils that they are as well catered for in Boroughmuir as any school I am aware of.

It is vital that we do not overly stress our pupils by giving them the impression that their lives will somehow be disadvantaged by this event. They will not, and that message has to come consistently from us. Our pupils are in the same boat as all other pupils across the UK and indeed the world and young people need to know that.

We do have to trust that the SQA and examination boards across the country will react accordingly to this event and put in place robust and fair processes to recognise pupil achievement as well as adapt courses as necessary so that pupils are not disadvantaged.

As I said before, we do not have details on any of this so please do not ask us to try and speculate, but the message I want all our pupils to hear is that 'everything is going to be alright'. Do what you can with Home Study, but don't let it take your life over. We still need a healthy home life/school life balance!

When we are all back at school proper again teachers will ensure that everyone has covered the essential work that needs to have been covered.

I hope you and your family are keeping well and coping with this incredible new world we find ourselves in.

Friday is of course the start of the Easter holidays and we all need a well-deserved break when it comes. I will be in touch before then.

All the best to you all.

D. Dempster

Head Teacher

## **Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March**

Week 1 Finished!

Thank you to everyone for helping make the first school closure week go so smoothly.

It really is testament to how well our whole school community works together.

Have a great weekend!

## **Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> March**

### **SQA Update**

I append a link which will take you to the latest update from the SQA which we received yesterday.

<https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/93658.html>

Having sought clarification we are told that the SQA will not be collecting any further assessment materials from schools.

Where appropriate however schools may use this material as part of evidence used to produce estimate grades.

The process for creating estimate grades has not been finalised and further advice on this process will have to come from the SQA as it applies to all schools across Scotland

**Please do not contact the school or teachers about the issue of estimate grades at this time as we cannot provide any definite answers.**

### **Home study - Expectations**

I hope all is going well with home study.

As said before, home study on this scale is new territory for us all! We are confident that pupils engaging with their subjects even on a reduced basis will continue to build mastery and improve their preparedness for the next year of study.

It is impossible to provide bespoke materials for pupils and therefore it is inevitable that some pupils will feel there is too little work and others will feel there is too much. Some will feel it is too easy and others will feel it is too hard.

Please try and communicate on-line with your teacher if necessary but be assured that whatever you do will be helpful to you. Making decision as to what to prioritise and what to do if you feel there is too much is something you should do.

Teachers will try to provide work at the next level after Easter, probably towards the end of April if school closures are still in place.

### **Hub Schools – Accommodating children of Key Workers**

The programme of support for the children of key workers is posted on our website in the Coronavirus section at

<https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/schoolclosures>

### **Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March**

This morning is the first day of school closures.

I have written this morning to all teachers by school email, all parents by the Groupcall messaging service and all pupils by the Office 365 TEAMS platform.

I am wishing them all well going forward with home study and hoping that they all stay safe and well.

Home study on this scale is not something that we or any school has been previously involved with.

As time progresses, we will I'm sure all become more confident with it and develop and source new resources to assist us.

Thank you for your support at this extraordinary time.

I append below my message to our pupils.

*Dear Pupils*

*Good morning on what is the beginning of the next extraordinary phase in dealing with the Coronavirus outbreak.*

*This is just a reminder of the on-line home study materials that you can access during this period of school closure.*

*The front page of our website has a link to Coronavirus information and home study information.*

<http://boroughmuirhighschool.org/coronavirus-updates/>

*You will be aware now that the government has said senior pupils are not allowed to attend school to finish any outstanding SQA course assessments. You are also aware that there is no diet of SQA exams this year.*

*However I do think it important that pupils in S4,5,6 complete as much course work as possible in SQA courses and that you try to develop mastery in each subject – especially those you plan to continue with into H or AH.*

*I know that some subjects will in due course try to provide introductory materials for the next level of study. I think for many of you this will provide further motivation and preparation for future study.*

*In the S1/2 phase most subjects have less teaching time. We do say that work will be provided on a basis that is proportionate to the time the subject has on the regular timetable. That said it is important that pupils in S1/2 engage with the home study materials and work through them in all subjects that there are materials for. I append below an extract about expectations around home study.*

*I would encourage you all to create a reduced timetable to assist you in your progress with your home study.*

*Providing home study on this scale is new territory for all schools but I'm sure as time progresses, we as a school will adapt and build on what we currently have available.*

*I do hope you are all well.*

*As with our staff, I cannot thank you, our pupils, enough for the way in which you conducted yourselves and supported each other in what was extremely difficult circumstances over the last couple of weeks. You are a credit to yourselves and the school.*

*As we enter the next stage of this incredible event, I know that we as a school will continue to do all we can to get through it together while providing the best possible support for all of our pupils and for each other.*

*Mr Dempster*

*Head Teacher 23/3/2020*

### **Supporting Home Study – Expectations**

- The school has provided on our website information on where to find a range of support materials to support pupils' home study
- Office 365 is the main platform that teachers are using to distribute and share learning activities. In particular the 'Teams' app is used extensively.
- This covers all stages of the school (S1-6) and most subject areas
- The work will be proportionate to time the subject has on the regular timetable and will also reflect the nature of the subject i.e. it will be more difficult to provide meaningful work remotely for practical subjects
- The learning will not be interactive but will take the format of guidance and support around the work provided. It is unrealistic that Teachers would be able to feedback to pupils on every piece of work provided or submitted.
- Individual departments will endeavour to provide as much quality educational activity as possible via office 365.
- We strongly recommend that parents/carers regularly discuss with their children the progress they are making in using these home study materials.

Teachers who are working from home may be themselves be unwell, be caring for others who are unwell or simply be fulfilling the role of family care. Therefore, the support offered may not follow a regular pattern. We appreciate your understanding with this.

Pupils who lose their password or get locked out of OFFICE 365 should email [Admin@boroughmuir.edin.sch.uk](mailto:Admin@boroughmuir.edin.sch.uk) to request assistance.

## **Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March**

### **Complete School Closure**

We have been advised by the City that the school will close completely as of today for all pupils and staff.

There had been some belief that pupils with outstanding course assessment would come into school on a planned basis to complete these assessments. This will not happen.

We are told that **Hub Schools** will open on 30<sup>th</sup> March to accommodate the children of key workers.

Families in receipt of **free school meals** are having money credited to their bank accounts by the City during the period of closure.

### **SQA Exams and Outstanding Course Assignments**

There is to be no diet of SQA exams this year.

SQA awards will be based on estimates provided by schools.

As said above schools will not now be able to complete outstanding course assessments.

Staff are being asked to provide robust estimate grades that the SQA can use to award National Qualifications. This is something staff are working hard on to provide the very best estimates for all our pupils.

In most subjects it is not just the prelim grade but an amalgamation of other evidence also.

**Teachers and the school are unable to enter in to dialogue about this at this time.**

The priority is to produce these estimates in a reliable and robust way which best reflects pupils' true ability.

### **Course Choice Process**

Please be assured that the course choice process will not be compromised by the removal of the SQA exam diet.

If you do have any vital queries about the process please email them to.

[coursechoice@boroughmuir.edin.sch.uk](mailto:coursechoice@boroughmuir.edin.sch.uk)

### **S6 Last Day**

Today was of course the last day of school for our S6. Although not ideal we managed to mark the occasion appropriately and the S6 have left in good grace.

We look forward to seeing them at our prom either in June or at another time in the future.

There are some photos on the @boroughmuirHS twitter page.

## **Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> March**

### **SQA Update**

#### **National Qualifications:-**

SQA have announced that this year's National exams diet will not take place.

It is being proposed that prelim grades, prior attainment and other evidence is used by schools to provide an estimate of a national qualification award.

This will take schools some time to do properly and robustly.

The Local authority will also provide advice on how this is best done and done consistently within and across schools.

We are unable to answer enquiries about this process at the moment so please do not contact the school.

#### **Course assessments and Assignments:-**

SQA are asking that pupils complete outstanding course assessments and assignments.

It will mean that some pupils in S4/5/6 will have to come in to school to complete these.

We are looking at how best to organise this and we will provide more information in due course.

#### **Accommodating vulnerable children and children of key workers:**

The local authority will provide advice on whether this is to be done locally or schools or in hubs across the City. WE will make this known as soon as we have the information.

#### **Providing Free School Meals:-**

The local authority will provide advice on whether this is to be done locally or schools or in hubs across the City. WE will make this known as soon as we have the information.

### **Skills Development Scotland**

Due to COVID-19 (Coronavirus) and the closure of the school, Skills Development Scotland cannot deliver career services face to face, but they are still there to help. Your child can contact their school Careers Adviser, **Lou Murphy** for career information, advice and guidance at [lou.murphy@sds.co.uk](mailto:lou.murphy@sds.co.uk) or visit [myworldofwork.co.uk](http://myworldofwork.co.uk).

You can also still access their career services. Call your local centre to speak to one of our qualified advisers. Find your nearest centre at [myworldofwork.co.uk/centres](http://myworldofwork.co.uk/centres).

You can also find their services for parents/carers online at [myworldofwork.co.uk](http://myworldofwork.co.uk) and [www.mykidscareer.com](http://www.mykidscareer.com).

## **Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> March**

### **School Closures**

The Scottish Govt announced today that all schools in Scotland will close this Friday.

For us that means we **will close at 12.50pm on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March.**

No date has been set for reopening.

### **SQA – statement**

Below is the announcement from the SQA today about National Qualifications

*“In the event of school closures, the Qualifications Contingency Group agreed that every effort should be made to ensure schools remain partially open to allow Senior Phase pupils to complete learning and be able to submit coursework, in addition to being able to open as examination centres during the diet, should medical and scientific advice allow. “*

This does not provide full clarity, but it does suggest that there will be a diet of exams in April / May if at all possible.

This is what the vast majority of pupils appear to want – albeit in a safe environment.  
Pupils therefore should continue to prepare for their SQA exams as best they can via **Home Study**

Hopefully more information will be forthcoming about how the diet will take place.

### **Supporting Home Study – Expectations**

- The school has provided on our website information on where to find a range of support materials to support pupils' home study
- Office 365 is the main platform that teachers are using to distribute and share learning activities. In particular the 'Teams' app is used extensively.
- This covers all stages of the school (S1-6) and most subject areas
- The work will be proportionate to time the subject has on the regular timetable and will also reflect the nature of the subject i.e. it will be more difficult to provide meaningful work remotely for practical subjects
- The learning will not be interactive but will take the format of guidance and support around the work provided. It is unrealistic that Teachers would be able to feedback to pupils on every piece of work provided or submitted.
- Individual departments will endeavour to provide as much quality educational activity as possible via office 365.
- We strongly recommend that parents/carers regularly discuss with their children the progress they are making in using these home study materials.

Teachers who are working from home may be themselves be unwell, be caring for others who are unwell or simply be fulfilling the role of family care. Therefore, the support offered may not follow a regular pattern. We appreciate your understanding with this.

Pupils who lose their password or get locked out of OFFICE 365 should email [Admin@boroughmuir.edin.sch.uk](mailto:Admin@boroughmuir.edin.sch.uk) to request assistance.

### **Access to Technology**

We today have emailed all families to offer assistance to households where there is little or no technology which would allow access to Home Study materials.

Please email [Clare.Braisby@boroughmuir.edin.sch.uk](mailto:Clare.Braisby@boroughmuir.edin.sch.uk) if this applies to your household and you would like help.

### **June Work Experience – Cancelled**

All work experience placements for our work experience week in June have been cancelled.

## **Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March**

### **Pupil Absence**

Due to the high volume of correspondence around COVID-19 we are unable to provide a personal reply.

The decision to keep pupils off school lies entirely with parents/carers and be assured the school will support you with your decision.

### **Supporting Home Study**

Please see our website (in Coronavirus section) for advice and links to assist pupils in working from home.

### **All School Trips - Cancelled**

All school trips up until the end of June are to be cancelled.

This includes UK based trips and activities as well as international trips.

As such our Activity Week will be cancelled in entirety.

Full refunds will be processed in the weeks to come but this is substantial work that will take some time.

### **All College Courses - Cancelled**

The college courses that some S5/6 pupils attend on a Tuesday and Thursday afternoon are now cancelled until further notice.

S6 pupils should work from home. S5 pupils should report to school library at these times

### **Child Planning Meetings/ Young Person Planning Meetings**

Where absolutely necessary we will try to hold any planned meetings however often external partners are required at these meetings and this may be a limiting factor in whether these meetings can take place or not.

As such each essential meeting will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

### **Drama Showcases for N5,H,AH Drama pupils - Cancelled**

The drama showcase events planned for the evenings of Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> & Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> March are cancelled.



## **Mon 16<sup>th</sup> March**

### **Pupil Absence**

Due to the high volume of correspondence around COVID-19 we are unable to provide a personal reply.

The decision to keep pupils off school lies entirely with parents/carers and be assured the school will support you with your decision.

### **Finger Prints**

The Finger Print System for pupils paying for lunches has been suspended.

Pupils will now give their name to the catering staff member who can debit their account.

### **International Trips**

The City of Edinburgh has indicated that all international school trips up to 30<sup>th</sup> June have to be cancelled.

This means that all our activity week foreign trips will be cancelled.

It is expected that full refunds will be provided in due course.

### **School Events**

Schools have been instructed to postpone major school events.

Events so far postponed are

Our Sports Personality of the Year - Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup>

Resonate Concerts at Queens Hall – Friday 20<sup>th</sup> and Summerhall on sat 21<sup>st</sup>

Art Showcase – Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> March