

Parent Council Meeting: Head Teacher's Report

16 September 2020

Safe Return to School

Overall in the sixth week since our return to school, the school is calm and functioning well. Learning and teaching, including remediation is progressing well and many aspects of digital learning gleaned during lockdown remain in use. It is apparent that both pupils and staff are missing clubs and activities as well as extracurricular sports and music. As a school we are really keen to have these important aspects of our school back in place as soon as possible.

Pupils are generally responding well to the adjustments required to mitigate risk infection. In particular regular hand sanitising, use of the one-way system and use of up and down stairs. There is a significant minority of pupils not in possession of a face covering and we would ask that you provide your child with one of these. As a school we are messaging pupils, staff and parents regularly via a weekly newsletter and the daily bulletin as well as virtual assemblies for pupils. The school has a well-established Health and Safety Committee consisting of nine members of staff who meet twice a week to ensure compliance of advice from the Scottish Government and also to address issues raised by staff and stakeholders. The school has been "inspected" by telephone by the HSE, HMI and CEC. Feedback from all these organisations about our compliance has been very positive. As a school we will not provide a running commentary on rumours around positive or negative tests results etc. If there is a positive case in the school all of our school community will be informed in the proper fashion with advice from the City of Edinburgh Council and NHS Lothian.

In the meantime, Boroughmuir along with all other schools are involved in creating a "School Renewal Plan" in the following areas:

1. Learning teaching and assessment, with a particular emphasis on digital learning.
Digital learning will be addressed in 3 veins:
 - Digital access for staff, pupils and in particular disadvantaged pupils.
 - Digital readiness for staff ensuring digital platforms and methodologies are in place.
 - Digital skills for staff, pupils and parents. (We hope to provide online tutorials to assist parents with areas of digital learning.)
2. Equity and inclusion.
Our existing programmes to support families in need may well have to be expanded to assist more families. It is vital that we can sign post family support for such things as free school meals, education maintenance allowance and school clothing grants as well as access to digital hardware and digital networks ie wi-fi.
3. Resilience/Health & Wellbeing/Equalities.
There is a particular emphasis on pupil health and wellbeing which has been addressed via a whole school survey as well as a University of Edinburgh survey. Follow up work is being done on the results attained. Staff health and wellbeing is also a major focus going forward. The equalities policies for all schools will be updated to ensure that anti-racism is better addressed.

The schools progress in the above matters is supported by the quality improvement team within the City and the date for this plan to be complete is the 26th October 2020.

Reporting/Tracking reports:

During lockdown it was not possible to use our school server based tracking and reporting system as it can only be accessed from within the school. As a result, S1 and S3 missed out on full progress reports. We have now put in place an additional tracking report for what was S1 (now S2) to sit alongside the scheduled tracking reports for the new S4,5 and 6. These will be issued shortly after the 25th September. We hope this provides a welcome means of communication on pupils' progress since the return to school.

Parents nights are planned to go ahead as scheduled but online with a video streaming feature. The existing parents evening booking system has been adapted by the company to allow video streaming to occur automatically within each five-minute slot. We are currently Beta testing this in school and will provide more info on it nearer the time.

SQA Results:

We are delighted with the results attained by our senior pupils in S4, 5 and 6. Although based entirely on teacher estimates they are very much in line (slightly improved) with previous years. It is a credit to our staff and our pupils in the way that they conducted themselves in what was an incredibly difficult period in the absence of national exams. It is clear that pupils hope that there will be a proper exam diet next year and we await further government and SQA advice on this matter. The Parent Council Curriculum Sub group will shortly receive a summary of the schools attainment and the Head Teacher will meet with them later in the year to do a full analysis of this.

David C Dempster

Head Teacher

16th Sep 2020.