



## North West Sutherland Schools

Newsletter June 2020

### **Online Learning**

Teachers across all the schools are working very hard to provide high quality experiences for our pupils. In the primary schools this involves regular class meetings on google meet and we have created a regular chance to meet less formally in what we are calling a google playground. The feedback from our recent survey of parents about the work in the primaries was very positive and we thank all who responded. We will do everything we can to address the few issues raised but we appreciate the limitations of shared devices, poor internet access and fitting school work around all the other things which go on at home. Please do not allow school work to become a source of conflict between you and your child, we would rather see a little work done which they have enjoyed and engaged with than have pupils sitting in front of a screen all day resenting the work.

High School teachers for pupils in S2 and S3 have created classes in each of the following subjects and there is work in each of these:

**Art, Science, CDT, Social Subjects, PE, Literacy, Spanish, English, Maths and Music**

Teachers of these year groups suggest that between 30 minutes and 1 hour per week is enough to cover what is set with perhaps a little more in English and Maths.

In S4 all pupils have 6 subjects and will have exams or course assessments at the end of the year. Teachers estimate that they should be spending between 90 minutes and 2 hours per week on each subject.

S5 and S6 pupils have a maximum of 5 subjects and should also be spending about 2 hours per week on each.

In addition, there are some regular meetings arranged and details can be found in the attached document.

Engagement with these classes from a minority of our high school pupils has been fairly disappointing and we will be starting to contact parents where little or no work is being done but we would ask that you encourage your children to complete the daily registration as a minimum

each day and that you remind them gently that they are not on holiday. It is a difficult balance to strike between not allowing school work to become a source of conflict and ensuring that at least some is being done and we do appreciate the difficulties involved but our senior pupils have exam subjects, these have started and they cannot afford to miss out on the next few weeks.

## **Staffing**

We are delighted to announce that we are able to retain Mrs Davidson and Ms Forrest as class teachers for Kinlochbervie Primary next session. Mrs Davidson will be the class teacher for P2-P4 (9 pupils) and Ms Forrest will be teaching P5-7 (11 pupils). The school roll will be 20 children with no new P1 children registered to start in August.

Sadly, we will say good bye to Miss Majanen at the end of term, she leaves us after four years in Kinlochbervie High school in which time she has taught History, Modern Studies, Home Economics and has helped a great deal with support for learning. We will miss her.

We will also say adios to Senor Alzolar who returns to Spain after a very successful probationary year with us and we wish him every success for his future.

Mrs Jarvis has also taken the decision to leave us at the end of this session. She has been an enormous support to all our pupils, particularly those with additional support needs and to our staff in what have been a challenging few years in ASN and in the schools. We wish her all the best for her future and we hope all our departing staff will keep in touch.

## **Transitions**

### N/P1

Our transition sessions this year will be somewhat different to what we had planned for our nursery pupils going into P1 and also for P1 pupils in Scourie who will be changing classrooms to go into P2. In order to begin making plans for these transitions & returning to school, whenever that may be, a questionnaire will be distributed to parents. This will be an opportunity for staff to gather parents' opinions and concerns in order to plan suitable activities accordingly. Each school will have individualised arrangements to suit the needs of their families, but will include opportunities for pupils & parents to meet with staff through virtual sessions.

### P4/P5

Scourie and Durness pupils will be in the same class with the same teachers for Primary Five. Kinlochbervie Primary four pupils will be moving classes to the P5-7 class with Ms Forrest. This school year they have been spending every Monday afternoon and Thursday's art lesson in Ms Forrest's class. They have also had a couple of whole days when the P7 were out building the Goblin Car. However, this term they would have spent more time in the older class with Ms Forrest. To give them some additional time P4 will be invited to weekly Google Meet sessions with Ms Forrest from the WB 15<sup>th</sup> June.

## P7/S1

We think our current P7 are in a very good position for joining S1 in August having spent the last three years in the high school on Wednesdays. This contact has increased this year as they have joined the high school for break and lunchtimes. However, we want to make sure their transition to high school is as smooth as possible and they have the best possible start in S1.

Since the beginning of May we have been running a '7s in Lockdown' weekly google meet. It has given P7 a chance to spend some virtual time together with art socials. From the beginning of June some high school teachers will be joining the google meet too.

### **End of term: Primary Celebrations**

This will be a very different end of term this year. However, we are keen to mark the occasion in some virtual way. Our usual Prize giving ceremony will be replaced with a 'Celebration Assembly'. This will be posted on Seesaw as a video on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June. The usual trophies will be replaced with celebration rosettes and certificates. We are immensely proud of all our pupils during this unprecedented period of learning in lockdown. We would like to end the school year with a celebration of everybody's achievements.

### **Leavers**

Our P7 pupils have shown great leadership throughout the school year. They have sadly missed out on many opportunities that we usually provide; Goblin Car Rally, Orkney trip, Transition Week, Leavers Meal to name a few.

However! We have some lovely things planned to mark their departure from primary school.

Each P7 will receive a leavers' hoodie, personalised Goblin Car boiler suit, scientific calculator and maths stationery set.

We have also organised a P7 Leavers Meal...in the form of a Meet and Eat. On June 23<sup>rd</sup> at 2:30 pm P7 will enjoy a delicious Afternoon Tea from the Old School Restaurant....while tuning in to a Google Meet with their P7 friends and teachers ☺.

Our S5/6 leavers' hoodies have arrived and can be collected from the school. As a small token of our sadness that we cannot end the term with the usual celebrations we will pay for the hoodies from school funds.

Discussions are going on with secondary staff about prize giving, it is unlikely that this will happen in any way normally but many of the prizes will be awarded and my report may have to be a written report this year.

### **Video**

You may have already seen the video which we made for all our pupils recently, it is on the school Facebook page and can also be seen on the North west Sutherland Schools website. It is a light

hearted but very heartfelt message to all our pupils and it has now at time of writing reached more than 12000 people and been viewed over 6000 times.

## **SQA**

We have now completed the exercise of submitting results for SQA courses and estimated grades where there would normally have been exams. Pupils will receive their results on 4<sup>th</sup> August and are strongly urged to sign up to My SQA to receive results by text or email.

## **August**

Preparations are under way across the highlands and at a local level to allow us to open in August in some way. At this stage it is not yet clear what form that will take or how much time pupils will be in school for but we are beginning the planning for that and teachers will be in school in the coming weeks to prepare. The new term now begins on 11<sup>th</sup> August and as soon as we are able to give more information about that we will do so.

Please stay safe and well and we look forward to the day when we can welcome pupils, parents and staff back to school.

Graeme Smart

Head Teacher