



NBHS WEEKLY UPDATE

Friday 1 May 2020

A bumper edition this week. Hopefully, you will have time over the holiday weekend to read it all.

Message from the Head Teacher

*It's times like these you learn to live again
It's times like these you give and give again
It's times like these you learn to love again
It's times like these time and time again*

Times like these have been beyond our ken, until now. I want to share with you just some of what these times mean for our staff.

- A majority of our staff have children at home, either pre-schoolers or school-age children working on their lessons at home. Some staff have young babies. Whatever age the child, all need their parents' attention and support throughout the day.
- Many staff have partners who are also working from home; sometimes, it is a struggle when all members of the family need to use IT at the same time. There can also be huge frustration when the IT does not do what you want it to do. I know that first-hand.
- Some staff are caring for elderly relatives or for family members who are sick, either in their own homes or remotely, with all the additional worries that remoteness brings. Some of our staff have, sadly, experienced a family bereavement since lockdown began.
- Some of our staff are volunteering in one of East Lothian's Hubs, providing education experiences for vulnerable young people and the children of key workers. They are in the Hub full-time for two weeks at a time and are catching up with their day job in the evenings. One of our teachers is working to produce visors (see below) and, again, is doing her day job around this.
- On top of all this, there is the worry and the fear which living through a pandemic and a lockdown brings. The hardest part, perhaps, is being kept apart from those we love. One of my greatest joys ever was becoming a granny, with the births of my two grandchildren last year. Now, and for the foreseeable future, I can't be with Knox and Skye, I can't share their first words, first steps or curiosity about the world around them. Zoom calls bring a fleeting happiness, then leave me feeling sadder.

Parents and carers, I know that you too will be experiencing much of this; you will understand, then, that it is not possible for any of us to fulfil our work responsibilities as we would if we were working normally. I know, too, that many of you are having a very different experience during this pandemic, as you carry on with your job in what must be very challenging and, at times, frightening circumstances. I am thinking of those of you working in health care and social care, in particular. We

see images of this on our TV news every day, but none of the rest of us can truly understand the reality of your working life. And then you go home from work exhausted, only for your children to tell you that they're stuck with their school work and they need your help.

Let's all have realistic expectations of each other in this difficult time. I want to assure you that the staff at NBHS are doing their absolute best for your children, the best they possibly can in the current circumstances. I know, too, that you are doing the best you can to support your children with their learning. Let's keep sharing our concerns with each other, sharing our appreciation for each other and supporting each other. That way, we can ensure that our wonderful young people have the most positive learning experience possible in times like these.

(Oh, and if you can't place the lines of poetry at the beginning, they were written by Dave Grohl of the Foo Fighters.)

Holidays

Just a reminder that **Monday 4 May** and **Friday 8 May** are school holidays – Monday is the May Day holiday and Friday is VE Day. There is also a holiday for pupils on **Monday 18 May**, which is an inservice day for school staff.

New Timetable

In last week's 'Welcome to the Summer Term' letter to pupils and parents from Mrs Rodger, there was mention of the new timetable starting in mid-May. It has now been agreed that all East Lothian secondary schools will start the new timetable on **Tuesday 19 May**. All pupils will move up a year group on that day, into their 2020 - 2021 classes. The pupils will be entered into new Google Classrooms, with their new teachers. The new start is particularly important for our current S4 and S5 pupils, who are no longer sitting exams throughout the month of May. We hope that they will be keen to get started on their new S5 and S6 courses, motivated and excited about the new learning ahead. Starting new courses two weeks earlier than originally planned will also help us to maximise pupils' learning should the re-opening of schools be by a phased return, as seems increasingly likely.

Ongoing Support for Pupils

We are very aware that some of our pupils are finding it particularly difficult to cope with not having the routine of normal school life. Guidance and pupil support staff have been keeping in regular contact with a number of families since the school building closed, as well as liaising with parents and pupils who have asked for support regarding a specific concern. We are also concerned that some of our pupils are not engaging with learning as much as we would expect and we are keen to support them to do so. To that end, faculty leaders will next week be making telephone calls home to the parents of the pupils giving us cause for concern. They will discuss with the parent what support we might give to help the pupil engage more in their learning. We hope that parents and pupils will find this helpful.

Further to support resources suggested in last week's Update, your child may also find Young Scot's COVID-19 information helpful. Link: <https://young.scot/campaigns/national/coronavirus>.

PPE Equipment - Visors

Ms Prete, faculty leader for design & technology, has been very busy over recent weeks: she has been working with other East Lothian CDT teachers to make visors for staff working in health, care and other organisations in the county, including here in the North Berwick area. The team is based at Preston Lodge High School, and they have now made well over 3000 visors. It's an incredible achievement in a short time – the staff even gave up much of their Easter holiday to keep the production line going and, now that term has started, they are combining this important work with

their normal school work. Materials are required to produce the visors, so a justgiving fund has been set up. It has gone way beyond its target, with many generous donations and lovely messages. North Berwick Community Council very kindly donated £1000, and the team were very grateful. If you would like to contribute, you can follow this link: <https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/julie-lowe>. East Lothian school staff are now producing scrubs too, so funds are still needed. Thank you.

Planned Residential Trips

As you are aware, the school trips planned for the summer term will now no longer be going ahead because of the ongoing situation with COVID - 19. We are in close discussions with both the Council and the relevant travel companies to negotiate the payment of refunds and will contact you as soon as we have confirmation of the position for each trip. Please be aware that these refunds will be processed by school office staff and will be repaid to you in the same instalments used to pay for the trip. There may also be a period of time before repayments show on your online account. Please be assured that we are striving to ensure that these refunds are made as quickly as possible and appreciate your support and patience at this time.

50 Word Writing Challenge

Here is the opportunity for an interesting creative challenge for all the family. During the month of May, Scottish Adoption are working with the Scottish Book Trust, challenging everyone to write a story about adoption using only 50 words. The challenge is open to all ages so, while everyone is safe at home, they are encouraging families to get involved. All stories are to be entered via the Scottish Book Trust website here www.scottishbooktrust.com/fifty-words-competitions/write-a-story-about-adoption and there will be prizes for the winners. Perhaps pupils taking part could also share their story with their English teacher.

The Big Book Weekend

Thinking about stories, here is something to enjoy over the upcoming long weekend. The Big Book Weekend is a three day virtual festival, bringing together the best of all the cancelled UK literary festivals. Below is the programme for Friday 8 to Sunday 10 May - there are some cracking authors (and more!) who are taking part. Registration is free.

<https://bigbookweekend.com/programme>

SCILT Languages Lockdown Playlist

Our ability to travel may be curtailed for the moment, but why not bring the world into your home and widen your language listening by boogying along to this fab playlist compiled by the Scottish Centre for Language Teaching? If you feel inspired, why not make a tiktok of your dance routine and share it with us by emailing it to Miss Ritchie (sritchie@edubuzz.org). The best ones will be posted on the Modern Languages Blog (if you're happy for me to do that)! :)

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLXe6vDIHtEF8Qg1xm1fxxCFHH4AJxhech>

“Buzzing about learning”: Learning Opportunities for S3 to S6 Pupils – and for Parents

Miss Ritchie shared the following information on two learning resources with her pupils this week and we thought it was so useful, we'd share it more widely. We also like her message to pupils about learning overall, so that is included below, too.

Open University - The OU are running free courses in a number of subjects. Each course tells you at the start how many hours of study it will take, it allows you to track your progress and it gives you a free Statement of Participation at the end of the course. Link:

<https://www.open.edu/openlearn/education-development/learning/free-courses-and-content-school-study>

eSgoil - eSgoil is an online learning platform which was set up in 2016, predominantly to offer more courses to pupils who live in the Highlands and Islands so that they could access the same learning as everyone else in Scotland. Currently, eSgoil is offering online, real-time courses for Scottish pupils during the current term. These courses are directly comparable with what your teachers would teach you. The link is below, and attached is the PDF timetable of courses that you can sign up to. When you sign up to these courses (by clicking on the link in the PDF document), please do set a recurring event on your google calendar so that you remember to attend your online classes. These courses are scheduled to start on MONDAY 4 MAY, so please sign up soon if you intend to do them. Link: <http://www.e-sgoil.com/media/1282/e-sgoil-national-offering-timetable-revisions.pdf>

A final word.... We feel that it is important to offer you the opportunity to excel in your learning. We're your teachers, that's what we're here for. We're also here because we care about you and, since that is the case, I need to point out that you are not obliged to sign up to these events. Do it if you are buzzing about learning your chosen subjects, if you are really keen to move ahead in an area of your learning. Pick what works for you and go with it! But be aware that it's easy to be overwhelmed by the choice of learning on offer and, with the best will in the world, you cannot do it all. We, your teachers, are coming to terms with that too. So, do what you love, do your best, and listen to your body and mind when you need to take a rest. QUALITY learning is what counts, not quantity.

Careers Information

We have been asked by Skills Development Scotland to let you know that you will be able to continue to contact the Careers Adviser for support. This will be done via telephone, Skype or online. Please be reassured that SDS Careers Advisers will continue to proactively contact pupils to offer them ongoing support. They also update information and post vacancy information at edubuzz.org/careers and Twitter [mickburns2](https://twitter.com/mickburns2). Any school leaver from S4 to S6 who needs help can contact our Careers Advisers by calling the local centre on 0131 665 3120, or contacting the NBHS Careers Advisers directly at:

Mick Burns Careers Adviser

Email: mick.burns@sds.co.uk

Jennifer Jones Careers Adviser

Email: jennifer.jones@sds.co.uk

Scottish Power Graduate vacancies [here](#)

Edinburgh University Science Online update [here](#) S5 to note

Find free online courses. Here is the [link](#)

EY Programmes for S5/6 students [here](#)

Happy News!

Yesterday, Mr Orr and his wife had a baby girl, called Dot. We are absolutely delighted for them both, and for big brother Mack. We've seen some pictures of Dot and she is gorgeous!

Communication

Just a reminder that if you wish to contact school you can email us at the address below, or contact your child's guidance teacher directly.

communications@northberwickhigh.elcschool.org.uk

Enjoy the long weekend, and let's hope that the sun shines on all of us in the North Berwick High School community!