



Date: 22 January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

Following the announcement on Tuesday 19th January by the First Minister we now know that remote learning will continue until Mid-February, with an update to be given on 2nd February. I hope the information below is helpful and we will continue to refine our whole school approaches as we go forward by listening to our learners, our staff and parents / carers.

It has been another busy start to the term across the Mearns Academy Community. There are a vast number of courses and classes on offer across our school and overall, the move to remote learning has gone extremely well. I do appreciate however there have been technical difficulties for some young people in accessing certain resources which have been provided. Hopefully the majority of these issues have now been resolved and I know a team of staff are continuing to work to support to resolve any problems that we encounter.

Google Classroom

Google Classroom is Mearns Academy's preferred digital learning platform. Teachers will post weekly work on Google Classroom along with any resources or links to additional resources. Teachers have been encouraged to set deadlines, so assignments appear on your child(ren)'s "to do" list. Some teachers may schedule Google Meets, which are real-time, on-line interactions with the teacher, or teacher and their classmates.

Remote learning can take many forms and includes:

- Providing learners with physical resources where needed such as learning materials, textbooks and digital devices
- Providing live learning and teaching sessions with children and young people either by communicating through the chat function or through live video links with learners
- Providing access to recorded learning sessions and tasks
- Setting learners tasks for completion and submission to / discussion with teachers
- Using the opportunity for 'live sessions' (as above) to check in, discuss and engage in person with learners following a learning task, but not to deliver lessons or content
- Engaging regularly with learners through email or an agreed platform

Managing Workload

Faculties will ensure work is available on Google Classroom and pupils should try to manage their workload throughout the week to avoid a rush to complete assignments towards the end of the week. Managing and meeting deadlines is only one aspect of home learning and pupils, parents and staff must ensure wellbeing is paramount.

Pupils, parents / carers and staff are feeling under increasing pressure with home learning. Teaching staff are here to support however this support may not always come immediately. Feedback and support will come however this may be after a couple of days as: not all staff work full-time, staff are juggling preparing lessons, doing Google meets, marking work and looking after their own children. If I can ask all pupils, parents / carers to please be patient and if after a few days there is still no feedback, then the pupil should contact their teacher. As always, please do not hesitate in contacting us around general concerns either via Principal Teacher of Guidance or using mearns.aca@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Engagement in Learning

I would encourage and ask all pupils to engage in the tasks set. If there are issues with completing the task / assignment, then please let your teacher know. Teachers will keep track of pupil engagement and this will be monitored at whole school level.

Should your young person be unwell and unable to engage in remote learning for either a day or longer, please inform the school of this in the usual way.

Phone: 01561 400700

or

Email: mearns.aca@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Learning from Home Guides

A range of support guides can be found using our website. Please visit our website and click on 'Covid 19 Learning from Home'

[Learning from Home Guides \(mearns.aberdeenshire.sch.uk\)](https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/learning-from-home-guides)

A copy of the guide links can also be found below:

[Learning at Home FAQs Jan 2021](#)

Please find below a guide for pupils on how to access and use Google Classroom

[Pupil Google Classroom Guide V3.0](#)

Please find below some advice on fixing issues with GLOW access

[GLOW-access-issues](#)

How to private message your teacher in Google Classroom – [Instructions](#)

Google Meet Guide – [Google Meet Guide – Jan 2021](#)

Parent / Carer Feedback

A Microsoft Form has been created to allow us to get feedback from parent / carers. The form is quick to complete and will be used to inform our future planning/decision making as we continue with remote learning. A separate text message with the link will be issued however please also find the link below.

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=BpPZ_i1NCUSVndDttzBKCxfSYIAPPT9OI-MaEXKS5ipdUNzgwRzJFT1ZXNUhFN09NMzkwUVIJNEhMRC4u

Head Teacher Google Meets

This week I met with our School Captains and next week I plan to meet with our wider Pupil Leadership Team. Going forward I plan to hold a Google Meet Assembly for each year group and or House Group.

Finally

In January we have welcomed two new members of staff to our Mearns Academy team. Eleanor Stevenson has joined us as Principal Teacher of Guidance and Laura Donald joins us our office team on 25th January as Admin Support Assistant.

As always, I thank you for your support and I do understand how difficult it is trying to balance work, remote learning and the numerous other challenges we are facing. We all look forward to further updates from the Scottish Government on the 2nd February and positive news on a safe return to school going forward.

Yours Sincerely,



Gareth Campbell

Head Teacher

Mearns Academy