

People Directorate
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Dear Families,

Head Teacher Update

We were devastated to hear the news of school closures yesterday. It was really difficult to witness the sadness that swept over our staff teams as reality hit home. Our job has many parts to it, but the most rewarding part is the interaction with our pupils.

There is a great deal of speculation surrounding which schools might remain open to assist with childcare for frontline workers and to support our most vulnerable families. At present, we await direction from the authority as to what this will look like. As soon as I am made aware of further plans, I will let you know.

We are going to try and support our families as best we possibly can at such testing times. In school, staff have finalised the first Home Learning Information Sheet for each class. These sheets are available on class pages on the school website. The information sheets are simply that – for your information. There is no expectation that pupils will be sitting in front of a laptop all day to access lots of different websites! From Monday, for the next two weeks, staff will upload daily tasks within the class pages on the website containing a variety of suggested learning. Please do not worry if you cannot get the suggested activities done! We are aware that family circumstances will all be very different at this time. The activities will be designed to deepen knowledge and understanding of core learning that has already taken place. We then have the fortnight of school holidays. If schools are to remain closed after the holiday period, staff will continue to upload suggested daily tasks.

A few things for you to consider:

- Check that you have access to our school website – we will use this to upload the suggested daily activities and other useful resources regularly. You can access it on any device such as phones, tablets or laptops. Type in <http://struthers.sayr.sch.uk>
- If your child is in P3-7, check they can access GLOW using their login details. From there, please also access the Microsoft Teams tile – this is where pupils will be able to communicate with teaching staff in relation to their learning. Parents of pupils in P1 and 2 will be asked to use SEESAW as a means of communication with teachers. (Additional information to follow as we are aware of a couple of technical difficulties)
- If you don't already follow us on Twitter, consider doing so @StruthersSchool. Twitter is a good way for staff to post useful information for families – and it would be lovely if families wanted to send us photos of some of the creative things you will be doing at home. Staff check Twitter regularly too!
- The activities on the Daily Plans are **examples** of learning, but please be creative. Everything you do with your children can be a learning opportunity. Dust down things like board games, jigsaws, Lego, construction, soft toys, books and use them to play. Reading

with your child, to your child, or questioning what they have read is such a rich literacy activity so try to build that into every day if you can. We encourage pupils to keep a log of what they are reading using their reading passports (P3-7) and can share this on return to school.

- GroupCall Xpressions will be the main method of communication between school and families. Please ensure that your current contact number is the one we hold in school, especially if you have not been receiving messages from us. Remember, with GroupCall, you can message us too. We will be regularly checking this service and will get back to you! We would ask, however, that you are patient in awaiting our response, as staff will inevitably have their own family commitments. You can also contact the school mailbox at Struthers.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk.

- **Please don't panic** if you are faced with some resistance from your child in terms of home learning. For many, they will see this as a bit of extra time off school at first, and will perhaps feel confused that they are being asked to complete work normally done in school, at home. Take time for you and your family to fall into a routine as mental health is equally as important as physical health. Don't worry about your child regressing in their learning. Every single child is in the same boat, and once we get them all back into the classrooms, we will meet their needs at that moment in time – that's what the staff here are wonderful at doing!

Information for Primary 7 Pupils and Families

In this time of uncertainty, the one thing we guarantee is that Struthers staff will go above and beyond to support our pupils. We understand that our Primary 7 children and families are anxious about what the school closure will mean for their end of year celebrations. At present, it is vital that we remain optimistic and hopeful that the schools will re-open at some point in the near future. Whatever happens, a celebration for our Primary 7 pupils will be held to mark their time in primary school. Not all of our pupils in Primary 7 are able to attend school at the moment; we are mindful of the importance of including everyone. We respectfully ask that children in Primary 7 do not view tomorrow as their final opportunity to celebrate their time in primary school. We would be grateful for the support of all parents and carers with this. I have spoken to P7 regarding expectations in regard to this.

We will be in school until Friday afternoon – no question is too small so please get in touch if we can help with anything before schools close. We will be available during the period of closure – staff are working, but doing so remotely. I know that the wording out there right now is 'indefinite closure' so we can't predict what will happen, but most importantly, stay safe and healthy and support one another well. Keep in touch with us – we will be sending out texts regularly just to check in with you all.

Very best wishes,

Gail McKellar

Head Teacher