

Term 1

The New Normal

It has been a very challenging time for all staff working in educational establishments since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, as we knew would be the case, the Dunnottar team (parents, pupils and staff) have worked hard together to ensure as smooth a transition as possible back to school. Thank you for your patience throughout term 1.

Our pupils are all now following the new school routines efficiently and have adapted incredibly well to the new systems in place to ensure our risk assessments are being followed for everyone's safety.

Congratulations to our new House Captains, Vice Captains and Prefects. We are confident they will support the staff well to lead the school during this challenging time.



Pick-up Time

We will continue to ask that parents and carers maintain a 2 metre social distance when collecting from the playground at the end of the day. This can be challenging as people leave the grounds. **We would strongly suggest that parents/carers wear face coverings when waiting at 3:15pm.** Class teachers dismissing the pupils will also wear masks. This should help to mitigate the risk further as you pass each other on exit/entry to the grounds.

Forgotten Items/Punctuality

We would like to remind all parents that you will not be able to drop any forgotten items off at school, unless of course it is vital medication. One of the reasons for this is that we may not always have office staff available to collect items. Office staff may be working from home. (Phonelines can be diverted in these instances.)

Drop off times will remain as the flexible drop off options of 8:55 to 9:10. **(Please note the earlier time of 9:10, no longer 9:15am.)** We would ask that all pupils are dropped off before 9:10am so that learning can start promptly at 9:15am. We realise that circumstance outwith your control can occur and pupils will of course be occasionally late, however it is often the same children who are consistently late. The learning for the whole class can be disturbed when pupils arrive after morning registration and lunch selections have occurred.

Reporting to Parents/Carers

We will continue to use Seesaw to report to parents, showcasing the learning daily. Class teachers will organise phone calls next term to update parents on pupil progress (more information to follow in due course). As suggested at a recent Parent Voice Meeting we will also be recording a short video of a 'typical day' in each class which we will then circulate through Seesaw. This will replace the 'Open Afternoon' that we would normally host in term two.



You offer be washing your hands.

Term 2

Outdoor PE

PE will continue to take place outside (as per government guidance) and therefore we would ask that pupils dress appropriately for outdoor gym on the days they have PE.

Ideas from you, for you....

Suggested list of activities to enjoy while following the Scottish Government restrictions. Ideas compiled from the recent school survey results.

- Family online cooking lessons!** Learn how to cook a new dish from an older relative online. (Recipes to be sent in advance of the cooking session so that all ingredients are bought and equipment is ready before live Zoom call tutorial.)
- Get Outdoors!** The bike park in Aboyne is worth a visit. We've been exploring all the countryside around us and ventured out the Royal Deeside where there is so much to see and do. Burn O' Vat is also a brilliant day out. Sharing these days with another family is great company and keeps the children happy and entertained.
- Family Fun Indoors!** Puzzles and board games, even trying to make your own. Enjoy movie nights, cooking or baking. Make a marble run. Enjoy craft activities, Lego or reading challenges, or host a family disco night.
- Camp Out!** Camping, in your garden or on a campsite, no need to travel to enjoy sleeping under the stars! Camping out at home complete with camp fire, sausages, toasted marshmallows and a bit of star gazing is always a winner!
- Visit Dunnottar Woods or The Beach Hide and seek** in the woods, look for fairy doors, climb trees, build dens, go paddling, collect shells, build stone piles. Bring a kite to fly, it's always windy enough!
- Learn Something New!** Watch Blue Planet or other interesting documentaries. Watch live webcams from zoos around the world. Mindful exercises/meditation. Map-making, storytelling, natural navigation, tracking and trap-making. Go Geocaching.

Ideas from you, for you....

Suggested list of wise words/top tips/suggestions of ways to help keep healthy during these difficult times? (Physically and mentally.) Ideas compiled from the recent school survey results.

1. **Switch off Netflix and enjoy a good book!**
2. **Look after each other, be kind, be patient.**
3. **Don't be too hard on yourself. Parents need to protect time for themselves too.**
4. **Use fitness apps.**
5. **Try to get outdoors every day! Stonehaven is so beautiful with many tourist spots.**
6. **Limit screen time; make weekly to do lists; make time to read/colour in and remember you don't need nice weather for a walk - just sensible clothes. You will feel better for a walk - even in the rain!**
7. **Listen to a good podcast, have a 'cozy up' outdoor BBQ and get fresh air every day at some point.**
8. **Get your news from reliable sources. Don't read the comments section of ANY social media. If you use social media, build in some good news sites to make sure you aren't subjected to the doom and gloom.**
9. **Give each other space if needed. Don't put pressure on each other. Make daily exercise fun.**
10. **Encourage children that can to video call their friends regularly to help maintain peer support.**
11. **Mindfulness is key. Accept what is happening and embrace it. There is a lot of joy to take from not rushing from place to place and having time to spend in the moment. Let your kids guide you.**
12. **Choose kind. Doing random acts of kindness is great for those good endorphins.**

Dates for the diary....

Monday 26th October - Start of term 2

Friday 30th October - Neon Disco (playground/during school day). Pupils to bring a donation in a sealed envelope. All donations greatly appreciated.

Although we hope we do not have to close the school again anytime soon, we feel it is important to contingency plan.

Ideas from you, for you....

Suggested list of ways to cope when learning from home. Ideas compiled from the recent school survey results.

1. Plan the day the night before.
2. Organise the learning into small chunks.
3. Routine. We tried to do certain things on specific days so that he knew what to expect and what my expectations were.
4. Having a clear structure to the day, which included outside time, walks, fun creative lessons and limited screen time.
5. Make a timetable for each day along with your child so they agree to activities and have a choice of what they are doing. Include 'fun' activities that fit in with your own work day.
6. Set clear objectives for learning each day/week. Don't put too much pressure on yourself (or your child). Take frequent breaks and have fun. Be prepared.
7. Start in the morning. Quiet working environment. Plenty of breaks.
8. Limit the pressure you put on yourself. As long as the children are healthy and happy and not worrying that should be the focus.
9. If something is causing stress, stop! Take a break and revisit at a later time/date.
10. Keep learning fun and try to do outdoor learning activities as much as possible.
11. Set up a learning area whether it be a room, a desk so the kids know this is their learning spot. Have a snack break, and let the kids lead.
12. Visual aids to make learning more fun, using different types of crafts to help younger children; velcro, laminated numbers/pictures, laminated sheets for writing and wiping off (to save paper waste).
13. Focus on child-centred, play-based, child-led activities, rather than trying to recreate a classroom lesson.
14. Don't put your child under pressure and focus on mental health as a priority. As long as the kids are happy we are happy.

BE KIND



TO OTTERS.