



## RESPECT INCLUSION TEAMWORK EFFORT

1 May 2020

### **DIARY DATES**

Monday 4<sup>th</sup> May Inservice Day  
Friday 8<sup>th</sup> May Day (V.E. Day) Holiday

Dear Families

### **ONLINE LEARNING**

Last week we began setting up online accounts for P1 and P7. This week we have been bringing P2-P6 onboard with our new online learning platforms. It has been quite a challenge setting up online home learning accounts for all the children! Thank you very much for taking the time to work with us to help us connect with you and your family. We appreciate there may still be some technical difficulties so if you are having problems, do please contact and we will try to support as best we can.

The teachers have had a hectic week, setting up accounts individually, planning Weekly Learning Grids collaboratively as a stage team whilst also welcoming each pupil to either SeeSaw or Teams. Many have also been supporting at the JGHS Hub for Key Workers. Initially, staff have had to maintain an almost constant online presence until everything is up and running but we will be moving to designated time slots in the day when staff will connect with pupils. We will advise you and the children of these times when everyone has been able to sign in.

Both SeeSaw and Microsoft Teams are likely to be new to you and the children. SeeSaw has a simpler and child friendly interface and feedback so far is that the children, families and staff are finding it a very useful and engaging tool. Microsoft Teams, however, can be quite daunting to navigate so we are aiming to make it as welcoming and engaging as we can. Initially we have tried to keep the tasks very simple and the screen uncluttered so we can encourage the children to find their online voice. We have given space to experiment and explore in a safe, engaging and non-threatening manner, guiding them as they come online. Mr Armstrong has produced a how-to-guide that we hope will help you in getting to grips with Team (see attached).

It is to be expected that the initial volume of 'chat' messages will be excessive, but we believe that reflects the children playing, trying things out, gaining familiarity and confidence with the platform and learning from one another, as well as the teacher. We are only at the 'entry stage', welcoming the children and supporting access, gradually building up use as a learning platform. We will begin to move to a sharpened focus on Learning from next week.

Emojis and emoticons have greatly changed the way people communicate and can be used as a shorthand, visual language to express feelings. They are also very easily and quickly grasped by children. Not only can they provide an immediate response but they can also express a nuanced meaning that would take pupils much longer to communicate in full typed text. For example, the thumbs up can denote agreement or understanding very quickly across a large group. There is an argument that emojis are eroding language but as we support the pupils in learning how to use Teams, there will also be an increased focus on using the platform to write extended pieces of submitted work. Initially, we are using emojis to provide a visual, fun way to engage and a quick way to express feelings and thoughts, to the teacher and each other. Teams are closely monitored by staff and if children post images or use emojis inappropriately we will use that as an opportunity to learn.

Each year group has now moved the 'chat' to a Playground Channel where pupils can continue to experiment and reach out to one another. In time the novelty will wear off, there will no longer be such a need for its use in confidence building/finding an online voice and we can restrict and time limit the use of the chat feature. Just now, the emojis (with teacher guidance and direction) are a very useful quick tool, in keeping with normal ways we check understanding in class, for example showing thumbs to gauge understanding in the room.

We hope you will bear with us as we develop the platform to become an important way to issue tasks to the children, receive them back and return them with feedback. Office 365 is the platform pupils will use at secondary school and we have long considered introducing it at P4-P7, in line with many other schools. We took the decision as a staff to implement at P3 since we believe that in the circumstances it would be helpful and wise to give them an early start in becoming accustomed to the platform. We hope you will make use of the opportunity to download Microsoft software and apps for free on up to five home devices.

## **LEARNING GRIDS**

We look forward to expanding the use of our new learning platforms and we really do appreciate your support and feedback. We will continue to publish our Weekly Learning Grids on the school website by Fridays and you will also receive a regular email from staff on Fridays. There is no expectation that your child should complete the whole grid, although of course many will wish to do so. To help you and your child prioritise, staff have added an asterisk beside core tasks. We have also worked out a way to make weblinks active within the Learning Grids which we hope will also help.

## **INSERVICE DAY**

Monday 4<sup>th</sup> May is an Inservice Day when I will be meeting online with staff. We will also be working on school developments so teachers will not be available in SeeSaw or Teams and we will switch off the Chat facility. Friday 8<sup>th</sup> May is a public holiday for May Day to celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of V.E. Day. Pupils can of course continue working on their Learning Grids if they wish but we will also restrict the use of 'Chat' on Friday.

## ONLINE ASSESSED TASK

The first assessed writing task will be set by teachers on Teams and SeeSaw on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May. There will be a clear Learning Intention and Success Criteria to guide the children and enable them to work independently. Staff will support the children in how to submit. The deadline will be by the end of the school day on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May. These will be marked and returned to pupils on Teams/SeeSaw by Friday 15<sup>th</sup> May.

## PARENT CONSULTATIONS/REPORTING

We have had a query about Parent Consultations. We are guided by CEC on this and they have advised that Parent Consultations will not take place this term. However, prior to school closure all teachers had been working on the Literacy and Numeracy/Mathematics sections of our new Reporting format and we intend to send these to you as soon we are permitted to access the school building. You will also receive the usual summary section of the report in June which teachers are working on throughout this term.

We hope you enjoyed our

Staff video [https://twitter.com/Edinburgh\\_CC/status/1255471858398498829?s=20](https://twitter.com/Edinburgh_CC/status/1255471858398498829?s=20) Today we received a Toilet Roll Challenge video from a few pupils in P6 and it was wonderful to see! Remember to Follow Us on Twitter [@SciennesPS](https://twitter.com/SciennesPS) where we love to see your Tweets. It is a really difficult time for everyone, for parents and teachers alike who are trying to manage full time jobs as well as educating and looking after children at home. However, everyone is doing their best and we all appreciate the support we are able to give one another.

Have a great weekend.

Stay home, stay safe and May the Fourth be with you!

Andrew

Andrew M Hunter | Head Teacher | Sciennes Primary School | 10 Sciennes Road, Edinburgh, EH9 1LG

Tel 0131 667

1243 | Email [andrew.hunter@sciennes.edin.sch.uk](mailto:andrew.hunter@sciennes.edin.sch.uk) | Website [www.sciennes.edin.sch.uk](http://www.sciennes.edin.sch.uk) | Twitter [@SciennesPS](https://twitter.com/SciennesPS)

## BELIEVE • ACHIEVE



# Please remember to wash your hands

Follow the correct hand washing procedure

[www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus](http://www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus)

