

CLASS CATCH UPS – IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

We are pleased to announce that the school will be trialling a weekly online call with your child (as either a pastoral class catch up or class group catch up).

It would be important to note that this has been agreed by our teachers as an **additional** offer to online learning – this is over and above school core online delivery and I firstly want to extend my gratitude and recognition of the fantastic commitment of all Balmedie staff to go the extra mile for our children!

The aim of these weekly calls will be to provide an opportunity for your child to catch up with their teacher/peers on an informal basis, to promote healthy dialogue on how the children are getting on during lockdown and to provide opportunities for further feedback where relevant.

We still need to navigate a few challenges due to the following;

- we are a large school with 16 classes and now a keyworker provision to consider
- we have siblings/families sharing online devices
- we have families/children accessing online learning at varying times of the day
- we have staff juggling family and professional workload challenges
- we must ensure that we have parental consent for online video use

Despite these challenges, our staff team have produced a timetable of when these weekly ‘catch ups’ can be offered and we would be delighted to invite your child to take part in this weekly activity if they can. Like all other online learning we are mindful that there will be a variation of engagement with all children at this time but we hope this will be another part of the virtual school week which will be of benefit to everyone if (or when) they can take part on a week to week basis!

As we begin to trial our class ‘catch ups’ we are looking forward to catching up virtually using our Microsoft Teams platform. Further information and guidance for this will be sent out by your class teacher via Google Classroom communication stream.

	9.00 – 10.30am	10.50 – 12.30 pm	1.30pm – 3.20pm
	<i>Time-slot invite to be confirmed and further information shared via Google Classroom by your teacher.</i>		
Monday		P3 M/L (Ms McRae) *	P1E and P1V
Tuesday	P2S and P2F	P4B and P4D	
Wednesday	No sessions due to ‘Wellbeing Wednesday’		
Thursday	P7C and P7V	P7/6S	P3 M/L (Mrs Lawrie) and P3H*
Friday	P5M and P5K	P6D and P6M	P2/1M

**P3 to hold class catch-ups in alternating weeks to accommodate job-share.*

We are using this online platform on the basis that this is the main Aberdeenshire Council collaboration platform and all staff are suitably guided and resourced to use this platform securely, plus;

- *Security and safety - children will receive a web-based invite link at a specific time and this will be a private chat space only for their class which is delivered and monitored by their teacher*
- *Organisation and maintaining acceptable use agreements - staff can control microphone access, participant access to the group and there is a hands up/icon function for those taking part to support larger group meets*
- *Communication - this platform allows for a combination of video/audio or just audio in case you are shy, may not consent to video conferencing or your camera doesn't work!*

Please refer to the attached 'Teams Code of Conduct' which will be used with the children to support positive interaction online.

It is important to note that we are facilitating an online conference call to which children will be invited to contribute in real time with their cameras on but....**this cannot be taken forward without parental consent.**

In order to make this process as easy as possible (and without committing unnecessary paperwork, seeking parental signatures, causing further delay etc), the school will be delivering this offer based on the following statement;

Advanced Parental Consent Statement

On the basis that your child is at home (or supported in the school keyworker provision), accessing a school facilitated online environment, with their camera turned on, there is already a parental consent to this online contact with their class teacher.

The purpose of this communication is to make this arrangement clear to parents that by accepting the invite to class 'catch ups' that this will be with parental consent as part of the school's online learning support offer so that children can engage with their teacher via MyTeams and through their chat/video camera.

If as a parent, you would prefer for your child to be part of the conference but with the camera off, that is no problem. You would be advised to please do the following:

1. Make this clear to your child, and any adults supervising your children.
2. Ensure the supervising adult is there during the call to ensure the camera is off.
3. Reply to this request and inform the school you do not wish your child to take part in class 'catch ups'.

For any further queries or concerns, please get in touch by contacting the school.

Many thanks for your ongoing support!

