Dear Parents/Carers

I hope this finds you all looking forward to the School Easter Holidays!  Please find attached my Term 3 Newsletter sharing lots of super news about what’s been happening at school over this past term, including dates of events to look forward to next term!  We have all been working hard and being the best we can be!  Please also find attached information on behalf of Stonehaven Sea Cadets, a charitable uniformed youth organisation based next to the harbour in Stonehaven.

Despite the snow yesterday, we trust better weather is just around the corner and we will see more signs of Spring!  It has been shared with me that some of you have been wondering if the crocus bulbs that had been dug up during the building of our new Nursery will be replaced.  We did receive additional crocus bulbs to plant but chose to have pupils plant them in one of our internal courtyard areas, for this growing season, as we wanted to see if any crocus bulbs had made it through the building works.  We didn’t want to accidentally dig up ones that had survived! We were delighted to see that some crocus bulbs have indeed survived, and we now know which areas are available for our next bulb planting project.  We will be having pupils actively involved in planting the replacement bulbs for more signs of Spring next year.

Hopefully more Spring like weather when we return will enable more families to feel encouraged to walk to school next term rather than taking the car……good for the environment, not to mention rising fuel bills…and there are the added health benefits too!  Concerns have understandably been shared by some parents in relation to drop off and pick up by car and unsafe parking.  **Please do remember that zig-zag lines should be avoided if you are taking the car!**

**COVID Requirements……**The First Minister has kept face coverings in place as a legal requirement in Scotland until 18th April with high case numbers across the country.  In her speech she said that the removal of face coverings will now happen on a phased basis over the coming fortnight.

**Upcoming dates:**

4th April – face-coverings no longer a requirement in places of worship or ceremonies.

18th April – face coverings become **guidance** on public transport and in indoor settings such as workplaces or shops.

18th April – the request for everyone to regularly test if they have no symptoms will end.

18th April - the remaining requirement to wear face coverings in schools (where they still exist) are to be moved to **guidance**.

End April – end of routine testing for people who do have symptoms.

Her message was that the best ways for us and our communities to stay safe is through vaccines, treatment, and **sensible personal public health choices**. We await further information as to what the expectations will be in relation to revised Risk Assessments for Schools.  We would greatly value your patience and support to allow us time when we return after the holidays to establish and process any changes we are required to make to arrangements currently in place in school.

We have all watched in horror at the events unfolding in Ukraine and the resulting humanitarian crisis. Nobody can fail to be horrified at the plight of millions of people fleeing their homes and seeking safety elsewhere in Europe; or indeed for those who have decided to stay, in spite of the threat facing them.   Across Aberdeenshire we have seen the true spirit of people wanting to help. People are offering to open their homes, make donations and show their support for Ukraine in so many ways. Aberdeenshire’s refugee resettlement team are at the heart of this activity, co-ordinating local efforts to ensure those Ukrainians who choose to come to Aberdeenshire are given the warmest of welcomes and the support they need to feel safe and secure during their time here. There is information on Aberdeenshire’s website <https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/communities-and-events/ukraine-support/>, be that links to charities, how to make donations or if you are interested in supporting a refugee in your home.

The war in Ukraine has started a chain of events that will impact on us all for some time. The rising cost of living is a huge concern to many in our communities. Families who were getting by and making ends meet are starting to really struggle to pay bills and having to make impossible choices between heating and food. The cost of fuel, food, and power are seeing exponential rises and that will make life difficult for many in the coming months.  If you, or anyone you know, is struggling to pay bills, there are services you can access for advice. The Aberdeenshire Money Advice and Welfare Rights Team  <https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/benefits-and-grants/money-and-welfare-advice/?msclkid=3dce35eaaacd11eca1e44c175e631243> can provide help on a range of financial matters, including ensuring you’re receiving all the benefits you’re entitled to and can help if you’re struggling with low level debts, or direct you to other agencies which can provide support. Please contact them for help and advice or check out more information online.

Wishing you all a lovely Easter!

Take care.

Kindest regards

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Aberdeenshire Council Education and Children’s Services

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**‘Being the best we can be’**

**Respect-Honesty-Responsibility-Kindness-Hardworking**