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***To Senior Phase Pupils
in Secondary Schools***

Dear Student

I wrote to you before the Christmas break and promised that I would keep in touch to let you know of any updated information about the pandemic and the impact on your learning.

An announcement and update from the Scottish Government is due on Tuesday 2 February when we hope to hear about a date that schools can open albeit on a phased return for now.

I know that this has been extremely challenging for you all - school is not just about learning, it is about being with your friends, taking part in a whole range of activities and I know you are missing it all.

But I want to take this opportunity to thank you - by staying home and taking part in remote learning we are all doing our bit to bring the infection rates down in our communities.

You will probably know by now that we've taken the decision to change the date of the next secondary school in-service day to maximise learning and teaching for our secondary pupils. This was supposed to take place after the mid-term holiday next week (Wednesday 10 February) but will now take place on Monday 19 April.

Also the SQA has revised the deadline for the submission of provisional grades from your teachers from 28 May until 18 June.

This is good news and means that the best thing you can do at the moment is to continue to focus on learning and be reassured that we all - head office, your teachers and schools staff - remain totally focused on ensuring that our senior young people achieve the qualifications they deserve.

This has been such an uncertain 12 months and I know that the longer it all goes on, the harder it is to stay motivated. However, the end is in sight and so we must focus on the future.

Your schools are there to support you through this and please don't hesitate to speak to or email a member of staff if you need any additional help or support - we can only help if you speak out, especially in these challenging times.

Yours sincerely

MAUREEN MCKENNA
Executive Director of Education