



NEWS RELEASE

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ExxonMobil donates laptops to Balwearie High School

ExxonMobil at Fife Ethylene Plant (FEP) is contributing to the education of local pupils by helping to buy computer equipment for a Kirkcaldy school.

It has provided funding towards 10 new laptops for Balwearie High School, which will be distributed to pupils who don't have access to a computer, enabling them to continue their school work at home.

The Mossmorran plant was approached by teachers from the school who were keen to see the education of pupils continue as uninterrupted as possible during the COVID-19 pandemic which forced the school to close its doors in March.

Teaching staff had noticed that a number of pupils who did not have access to computers at home were becoming more isolated and at risk of falling behind with their school work, and decided to take action.

Margaret Johnstone, the school's Support Services Co-ordinator, applied to FEP for help and the plant was happy to contribute.

She explained: "When schools closed due to COVID -19 we knew that some pupils might not be able to get online learning and support from our Guidance team. It became clear early on that the number of pupils with no ICT support was much higher than first thought.

"We decided to try and get something for our pupils as we knew the longer they were disengaged from learning the bigger the impact it would have on their education and their mental health."

As well as continuing to be used by pupils over the holidays and until schools resume a full timetable, the laptops will be used when pupils have to work from home, including study leave.

Jacob McAlister, plant manager, said: "Balwearie is a school which clearly cares about its pupils and their education. Reaching out for support shows their commitment and innovative thinking and we are delighted to be able to help."

Neil McNeil, rector at Balwearie High School added: "It is vital that we do all we can to ensure that no young person is left behind with regard to the online learning taking place as a result of schools being closed.

"The contribution of laptops will enable us to reach out to families in need of support now and in the future and offer a degree of equity of opportunity. I am grateful to ExxonMobil for their assistance and thank them on behalf of our community."

