

**Education Resources
Executive Director Tony McDaid
Head Teacher Kevin Boyd
Strathaven Academy**

Our ref: KB/CD
Your ref:
If calling ask for: Mr Boyd
Phone: 01357 524040
Date: 09 March 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

Phased return of pupils to school from 15 March 2021

I am writing to provide you with an update about our plans for the phased return of pupils to school and the return to in-person learning. Following the decision made by the Scottish Government on Tuesday 2 March 2021, schools were asked to look at welcoming back more pupils from 15 March.

It is the Scottish Government's expectation that all secondary school pupils will be back in school on a full-time basis after the Easter holidays.

Prior to that, the phased return from 15 March will provide all pupils with the opportunity to attend for some face-to-face learning. We will carefully consider the adaptations we need to make to maintain 2m distancing in classrooms during this phase of the return and to balance what we offer in terms of remote learning for our pupils. This includes:

- *making best use of the building and the space for pupils to ensure they adhere to the requirement for 2m physical distancing when inside the school building. (1m distancing on school transport);*
- *establishing routines for the safe entry and exit to the school building;*
- *minimising, wherever possible, the general flow of pupils around the school throughout the day; and*
- *following SG guidance of expectations relating to pupils wearing face coverings.*

Therefore, from 15 March, all secondary pupils will receive a blend of remote learning and some in-school teaching. As is currently the case, senior phase students (S4-S6) who are taking national qualifications will have priority for face-to-face lessons in school.

Please note that as teachers will now have an in-school teaching commitment, remote learning will necessarily have less direct interaction and more recorded or self-directed activities during this period.

Pupils will be invited back into school on prearranged days/times to engage in specific learning. Further details about when and how this will be managed is covered in the *Timetable Information* section below.

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Senior phase pupils (S4-S6)

As advised by the Scottish Government, senior phase learning will be prioritised during this 3-week transition period.

Senior phase pupils will attend school for two or three days per week.

This will support progress towards the process of certification of National Qualifications. We aim to ensure that our pupils have secure foundations and course coverage prior to undertaking formal assessment, which will take place in the later stages of the 2020/21 academic session.

Broad General Education pupils (S1-S3)

To allow us to spend time to reconnect with S1/2/3 pupils, the time in school will focus on Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing (including outdoor learning).

Pupils in S1,S2 and S3 will attend school for one day per week.

Please note that pupils will follow a bespoke timetable during in-school sessions but will revert to their normal classes once we return to school full-time.

I would also take this opportunity to highlight the measures in place to maintain the safety of our pupils and staff.

Health and Safety

The school already has in place robust infection control measures such as enhanced cleaning regimes, access to hand sanitisers on entry and exit and within classrooms, the appropriate use of face coverings, 2m distancing between staff, and between staff and pupils where possible. In addition, as part of the phased return to school for senior phase pupils, all pupils in secondary school buildings will be expected to adhere to strict 2m physical distancing.

We would like to remind pupils and parents of the need to follow all the relevant guidance and would also request that parents avoid contacts with other parents and young people at the school gates, on the way to school and after school to reduce the risk of community transmission of the virus.

Pupils will be reminded about compliance with the existing safety procedures in place including the wearing of face coverings during classes, in busy communal areas within school and when visiting shops out with school grounds.

Lunch time Arrangements

We would encourage pupils to remain in the school grounds at lunchtimes to limit the potential for contacts in the wider community. Those who choose to go offsite must follow the rules in place for wider society, for example wearing a face covering when entering a shop. On return to school, pupils must adhere strictly to hand hygiene and infection control measures.

Any pupils eligible for means tested free school meals will continue to receive payment.

Scottish Government guidance outlines that schools should encourage learning and social activity outdoors, where appropriate. Our young people will be asked to spend time outdoors during the school day, especially during breaks and lunchtimes. Pupils are asked to ensure they wear suitably warm and waterproof clothing to school. If you need assistance with this, please contact the school office.

Transport

From 15 March 2021 physical distancing of 1m applies on secondary school transport. This will significantly reduce the capacity of vehicles. Please also remember face coverings are required for all pupils on designated school transport.

Lateral Flow Device (LFD) Testing

Our staff are currently taking part, along with pupils in S4-S6, in lateral testing. This involves taking a twice weekly at-home test through a lateral flow device (LFD). This is to help identify asymptomatic individuals at the earliest opportunity and to enhance the confidence of staff, pupils and families.

We encourage all staff and senior pupils to opt-in to the lateral testing programme although we do recognise this is voluntary. However, to take part a consent form must be completed. A video link on lateral testing is available for you to view:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLvaBZskxS7tzQYIVq7lwH5uxAD9UrSzGJ>

To find out more and to receive a lateral testing kit and consent form please follow instructions previously issued by the school.

At this stage we know that the Scottish Government have agreed this week that S1-3 pupils should now be included in the at-home asymptomatic testing offer after the Easter break. I will provide a further update on this before the Easter holidays, but it will mean pupils will be provided with home-testing kits and your consent will be required.

Childcare Hub Provision

The Hub for identified vulnerable/key workers' children will continue to operate. Qualifying pupils should attend school hub as per current arrangements and attend face-to-face learning opportunities with their peers as timetabled. At all other times, this group will be kept separate from the larger group attending for face-to-face learning.

Physical Education

From 15 March, Physical Education will restart for limited groups of pupils under the following conditions:

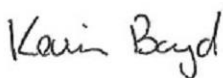
- Young people can participate in non-contact physical activities outdoors
- 2m distancing between young people may be relaxed when they are outdoors for the purpose of outdoor activities and learning

Strathaven Academy Blended Learning Guide

Further information can be found in our Strathaven Academy Blended Learning Guide (09-03-2021). The days that your child should attend school over the next three weeks have been sent to pupil GLOW email accounts. Individual timetables will be emailed to pupils later this week.

We look forward to welcoming back our pupils on a phased basis and your support and co-operation in helping us to work together to do this in a safe way is very much appreciated.

Yours sincerely



K BOYD
Head Teacher