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Dear Parent / Carer

Important Information on the Phased Return of Groups of Senior Phase Students for Practical Activities

On 2nd February, the First Minister announced ([here](#)) outline plans that Early Years, Primary 1-3 and groups of Senior Phase students would return to school from 22nd February 2021, subject to confirmation on 16th February. This confirmation has now been received.

On 12th February, Education Scotland released technical guidance ([here](#)) for schools on how this phased return for groups of Senior Phase students might look. This letter sets out the approach we plan to take at Inverurie Academy to ensure we support Senior Phase students whilst also remaining close to the published guidance.

Please find below a rationale for the Inverurie Academy approach followed by a set of 'next steps' for parents/carers and students to take in preparation for any phased return.

Rationale

-  These plans identify a phased return for groups of Senior Phase students from 22nd February.
-  *This limited return of learners is for the purpose of completing the learning and teaching of critical practical work in relation to qualifications in 2021.ⁱ*
-  *On that basis, senior phase learners timetabled in school to undertake practical work at any one time should be no more than 5-8% of the secondary school roll.ⁱⁱ*
-  Our interpretation of practical activity is that that which *supports learning and teaching in subjects where there are the highest levels of practical work that require in-school facilities and cannot be undertaken remotely.ⁱⁱⁱ*
-  In order to support delivery of effectively-sized portions of learning and to ensure school transport provision is as unaffected as possible, we will temporarily adapt our school day for this practical activity to:-

Morning – 09.00 – 11.30
Afternoon – 12.10 – 14.40
(lunch times will be staggered across classes to minimise congestion)

-  Mr O'Connor and Dr Drysdale have worked closely with our Faculty Heads to create a column-based timetable that minimises the chances of students who are in school for practical activity from missing out on live/interactive opportunities.
-  We anticipate that this phased period may last for three weeks and so have planned for this eventuality. We will be releasing the three-week timetable for students, but you will understand that it may be that plans for Week 2 and 3 necessarily change if practical work is completed more quickly

or if Scottish Government advice changes. If there are such changes, we will be in touch as early as possible to let you know.

- Significant discussion has gone into creating a timetable of valuable time in-school, and we have not been able to allocate subjects all the time they have requested. This means that it is of utmost importance for students to approach this time responsibly and with full compliance.
- Given fluctuations in infection rates and that guidance may change with relatively short notice, the Inverurie Academy school community will require to be ready to be flexible regarding arrangements during this time.
- Whilst creating these practical opportunities, we are committed to continuing a balanced offer of remote activities for both S1-S3 (Broad General Education) and S4-S6 (Senior Phase) students.^{iv}

Next Steps

- Within the next 24 hours, those students who are scheduled to have in-school elements in this phase will receive an email with the timetable for Weeks 1-3. Remote learning will continue unaltered for those with no practical elements to be delivered in-school in the first phase of return.
- As has been seen from the timings above, school transport for students will continue to be in place with collection and drop-off times very similar to our 'short day' format.
- Any student contacted with a timetable to attend for practical tasks must watch the S4 induction video that can be found [here](#). This induction video includes: Year Head welcome; SQA update; Structure of phased return; How the school day will run, and COVID-19 measures. We would encourage parents/carers to watch this video with senior phase young people in your family.
- In line with Scottish Government advice, there is a strong encouragement to participate in the LFD (asymptomatic) Testing, with separate communication having been sent to you by the school on this. We see this testing, in place for our staff team and Senior Phase students, is an important part of the role we can play in reducing risk for all in our local communities.

We at Inverurie Academy long for the time when we can return to a sense of normality and welcome all students back to Inverurie Academy. However, in the meantime please be assured of our continued efforts to support both physical (keyworker provision, vulnerable students, and now practical activities for Senior Phase students) and remote learning.

Thank you for your continued support of Inverurie Academy.

Yours sincerely



Mr M Jones
Head Teacher

ⁱ <https://education.gov.scot/media/ry4bk2eg/returnofseniorphaselearners.pdf>, Page 2

ⁱⁱ <https://education.gov.scot/media/ry4bk2eg/returnofseniorphaselearners.pdf>, Page 2

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://education.gov.scot/media/ry4bk2eg/returnofseniorphaselearners.pdf>, Page 3

^{iv} <https://education.gov.scot/media/ry4bk2eg/returnofseniorphaselearners.pdf>, Page 3