

Parent/Carer Return to School Information

Dear Parent/Carer,

The COVID-19 pandemic has meant we have all become used to frequent and swift changes to the way we have been living life. As you know, this has had an impact on delivery of learning and teaching with students experiencing initially remote learning, and then blended learning over the last term.

I understand that families and young people will be particularly keen to know about the plans we have in place for the new term before the start of the Easter Holidays. Having reviewed the available guidance, we have made a provisional plan for the return of all students from Monday 19th April 2021. This plan can be found on pages 2-4 of this letter.

Providing you with an overview of our plan at this stage does therefore mean that it may be subject to change. We expect to receive confirmation that these plans can proceed during the Easter Holiday period. Confirmation is likely to come from the Scottish Government on 6th April. If an update to our plan is required thereafter, we work on this quickly, and communicate the changes to you as soon as possible. The guidance we have used to create the current plan relies on the Scottish Government advice which can be found [here](#). This was published on 24th March 2021.

I would like to place on record my sincere thanks to you all as part of our school community for your continued patience and support during this recent period of lockdown. I would also like to record a formal thanks to the members of the staff team without whom our plans simply would not have worked: the Janitor and Technicians, the School Office, and the wider staff teaching and support team.

I look forward (subject to any further changes) to welcoming all students back from 19th April.

Yours sincerely,



Mr M Jones
Head Teacher

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Induction Arrangements

During the week of 29th March, we provided induction for students about what to expect in the new term during their in-person learning days. This induction comprised the following three key areas:-

- Structure & Timetabling from 19th April
- The changes to expect from 19th April
- Information about use of Face Coverings

<http://bit.ly/ICC190421Structure>

<http://bit.ly/ICC190421SameDifferent>

<http://bit.ly/ICC190421FaceCovering>

The School Day

In order to facilitate a return for all students to school, the advice from Scottish Government is that the rules around social distancing be relaxed in favour of other mitigations already in place for schools (see information about Face Coverings, LFD Testing, Changed School Day and One-Way System).

Our plan is to return to the school day routine that was in place between August and December 2020, a reminder of which can be seen in the table below...

Year	Beginning	Break	Lunch	Monday, Tuesday, Friday	Wednesday, Thursday
S1	8.45	10.30 – 10.50	12.30 – 13.10	14.45	15.35
S2	8.45	10.30 – 10.50	12.30 – 13.10	14.45	15.35
S3	8.45	10.30 – 10.50	12.30 – 13.10	14.45	15.35
S4	8.50	11.20 – 11.40	13.20 – 14.00	14.50	15.40
S5	8.50	11.20 – 11.40	13.20 – 14.00	14.50	15.40
S6	8.50	11.20 – 11.40	13.20 – 14.00	14.50	15.40

ambition

inclusion



integrity

respect

The rationale behind this changed school day is:-

- Reducing movement around the school by temporarily removing the ten minute registration period. This measure also reduces the number of 'contacts' across the school day.
- Reduction of the number of students moving at any one time reduces 'bottle-necks' in corridors (hence staggering the beginning and end of the day).
- Congestion in the school and community is reduced by having separate break and lunch times for S1-3 and S4-S6.
- A shortened lunch resulting in a slightly earlier finish to the school day (on long and short days).

We will return to the timetabled classes as scheduled between August and December. We have provided all S1 and S2 students with a fresh copy of their timetable, but expect that our S3 to S6 students will have kept a copy of their timetable which will allow them to resume classes. If this is an issue, students who need a copy of their timetable will be able to collect one on their return to school.

School Uniform

School Uniform continues to be an important part of our school life, and is expected to be worn.

- This was a uniform created for and designed by students within the last few years.
- The uniform forms part of the process of 'normalisation' where students again become accustomed to life in school following the last six months of upheaval.
- The school uniform is an important 'identifier' promoting security within the school building.
- There is some evidence to suggest that removing outer layers on return home may offer some protection to families from exposure to germs circulating in school – in addition to other measures.

If you are struggling to access uniform, please contact the school. We have access to clean supplies of uniform, and we would be happy to loan these if this would be helpful.

Corridors

As part of our response to the Scottish Government guidance, we introduced a one-way system in the school building. In supporting our efforts to mitigate risk, our expectation is that all students will follow this one-way system, as was the case last term.

PPE & Hygiene

The latest available Scottish Government advice (link provided again [here](#)) is that face-coverings should be worn by all secondary-aged students and adults and, with allowance for medical exemptions (apply for an exemption badge [here](#)), this is our expectation for members of our school community. To be clear, the advice is that face-coverings be worn in classrooms, social areas and corridors. Students can remove face coverings temporarily whilst sitting down and eating, but these must be replaced promptly when finished.

Students will be expected to use hand-sanitiser gel when arriving at school, and regularly during the school day. This is readily available at all entrances/exits, and across the campus. Students can expect to be asked to wipe down their work-station before moving on to the next class.

LFD Testing

At the end of February 2021, the Scottish Government started to introduce Lateral Flow (LFD) Testing for school staff and senior students. This offer was extended to all secondary students with a view to testing commencing in time for 19th April. We have been in touch with all parents/carers either through email (S4-S6) or by letter sent home with students (S1-S3) and participating students should now be in possession of their test kits. Students may pause testing during the Easter Holidays but are requested to test on Sunday 18th April prior to returning to school. Although participation is voluntary, it is strongly encouraged by Scottish Government, and therefore by Inverurie Academy. This testing process forms a key part of our mitigating risk in the school community and beyond. A flowchart to help understand what to do at each step of the process can be found [here](#).

Health and Wellbeing

As the preparations for the new term are finalised, it is very important that we all remain familiar with the guidance on how we should reduce the risk of transmitting the virus. The best source of information is on the [Scottish Government website](#).

At the time of sharing this with you, any young person who has symptoms of COVID-19 (including a continuous cough, a high temperature, or a loss of or change to sense of smell or taste) must isolate at home for 10 days, and request a COVID-19 test. Others who live in the same house (e.g. siblings – even if they attend another school) must also have a period of isolation. Clear guidance will be given on next steps depending on the result of the COVID-19 test.

If a member of your family is confirmed to have COVID-19, please make contact with us and let us know as soon as possible. Your cooperation with this will help us to protect the wider school community, and as far as is possible your privacy will be respected. We will cooperate fully with any contact tracing that is required.

Risk Assessments were already in place for all aspects of school life and these have now been updated to include COVID-19 risk-reduction measures. We have comprehensive plans in place should anyone within the school develop or display symptoms of COVID-19. Staff will be briefed on the processes as part of their induction to ensure that all remain absolutely clear on how to respond to this situation before our students return. Whilst we hope these arrangements are not required, should your son/daughter display symptoms of COVID-19, you can expect that they will be isolated from other students and you will be asked to collect them immediately. Confirmation of a negative COVID-19 test will be required before they can return to school.

Parents/Carers & Visitors to School

The Scottish Government advice is that *visitors to school should be strictly limited* and that *parents/carers should not enter school buildings unless required*. This means that parent/carer contact will be limited to phone and online communication with the only exception to this being in an emergency.

Bring Your Own Device

We previously communicated with you about an initiative to permit students to bring their own devices to school to support digital learning. This is now available to all students S1-S6, and devices may be used at the discretion of the class teacher, depending on the nature and content of the lesson.

Please be aware that this is entirely optional, and there will be no detriment to the learning of those who do not or cannot bring their own device to school.

Student Responsibilities

It would be greatly appreciated if you could reinforce the importance of compliance with the expectations described in this document with young people in your family. We have worked hard to arrive at the appropriate balance of risk-mitigation and a return to as normal an environment as possible. The procedures described must be complied with as a way to keep individuals and families safe.