7 August 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

**School Plan for Re-opening**

On 30 July the Scottish Government published its guidance for re-opening schools - <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-preparing-start-new-school-term-august-2020/>. At the same time, John Swinney, the Deputy First Minister (DFM), made a statement in Parliament which explained the reasons for this.

All Aberdeen Secondary schools are planning an induction programme for pupils for the first week back commencing Wednesday 12 August. For all schools, the content and precise physical arrangements will vary because of the nature of each of the schools. Pupils should only attend school as detailed below.

**Changed Timetable for Induction Days**

To minimise pupil time in school given the current situation and to allow time for induction we have changed the finishing time for each day as follows. We have also included detail on entrances pupils MUST use.

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| **Day and Date** | **Purpose** | **Times** |
| Monday 10 August 2020 | Staff-in Service Day  | 8.34 am – 3.55 pm |
| Tuesday 11 August 2020 | Staff Planning Day  | 8.34 am – 3.55 pm |
| Wednesday 12 August 2020 | S1 Induction and Orientation All S1 pupils enter by community centre doors – see attached map. Pupils must sanitise hands on entry – using the sanitiser station on the wall in the canteen and will be escorted to registration classrooms from the canteen. S6 InductionAll pupils enter by the doors outside G17. Pupils must sanitise hands on entry – using the sanitiser station on the wall just inside the entrance and make their way straight to registration classrooms. | 8.35 am – 10.55 am for S1 pupils8.45 am - 11 am for S6 pupils  |
| Thursday 13 August 2020 | S2 Induction All S2 Pupils enter by the doors that go into the Art Gallery area, beside the library windows. See attached Map. Pupils must sanitise hands on entry – using the sanitiser station on the wall just inside the entrance and go straight to registration classroom. S3 Induction All S3 Pupils enter outside G10: where we enter school following a fire evacuation. See attached Map. Pupils must sanitise hands on entry – using the sanitiser station on the wall just inside the entrance and go straight to registration classroom.  | S2 pupils 8.35 am – 10.55 am S3 Pupils 8.45 am – 11.00 am  |
| Friday 14 August 2020 | S4 Induction All S4 Pupils enter by the doors going to GP2/canteen at the front of the school. See attached Map. Pupils must sanitise hands on entry – using the sanitiser station on the wall just inside the entrance and go straight to registration classroom. S5 InductionAll S5 Pupils enter by the doors going to the library: outside the HE kitchen windows. See attached Map. Pupils must sanitise hands on entry – using the sanitiser station on the wall just inside the entrance and go straight to registration classroom.  | S4 pupils 8.35 am – 10.55 am S5 Pupils 8.45 am – 11.00 am. |

**Why are pupils using different entrances on induction days?**

Using these entrances on the induction days will allow us to monitor their use and help young people to become familiar with them. When we return on a full-time basis, on 17 August, pupils will be using different entrances each morning and following the end of break and lunch to avoid large groups coming together. We will also be staggering the start and finish times to further reduce large groups meeting in corridors. The fine details of these times are to be confirmed when they have been fully discussed with staff on Monday 10 August. These times will not affect the length of the pupil day or timings for school transport.

**Young people with Additional Support Needs**

Some young people will need support to access the building with confidence. Support staff will be in touch with families prior to their induction days to explain the arrangements to support their arrival in school and access to classes. In some cases, this may mean using the main entrance and, by prior arrangement only, being accompanied.

**The Purpose of Induction**

All young people will be briefed on the health and safety guidelines in place as well as the expectations regarding their responsibilities for social distancing. This will help them understand the arrangements and give them the chance to ask questions. They will also be given (as appropriate) resources for their own use.

**Orientation for S1**

There will be a need to make young people in S1 familiar with the building: they have had some limited experience of this – and in some cases none. We will use volunteer seniors as guides. There is also an interactive map on the school website and a map attached to this letter. On Monday 17 August they will be met at their entrance to the school at 08.30 and taken to their registration classroom. From Tuesday 18 August they should make their way to registration classes at 08.34 using their own entrance door – the community entrance.

**Course choice: essential changes**

Young people in S5 and S6 who must make changes to their timetable following their SQA results should in the first instance contact their Head of House via Gmail as soon as possible. Heads of House **will not be back in touch until the week beginning10 August**. We are currently working on a procedure to do this and we will inform pupils about this as soon as possible after 10 August through Google classroom. It will involve appointments: no pupil will be seen without a previously arranged appointment.

**SQA Review of Results (Appeals)**

Any pupil who wishes to discuss a review of their result should contact their class teacher or head of department in the first instance by email or phone call. If you are a leaver this is essential as we must strictly limit adult access to the school building. If it is necessary for you to come into school – e.g.to sign paperwork in relation to an appeal - arrangements will be put in place to do this by appointment and to limit your time in the building.

**Health and Hygiene Responsibilities**

Many of the health and hygiene aspects of our contingency plan will apply from August. Young people will be expected to follow the same rules in school as we are all expected to follow outside of school. This will include respecting the rules with regard to social distancing and school staff. It is up to us all to prevent the spread of Covid-19 as much as possible. We fully expect our young people to play their part when they are in school. By respecting the arrangements in place to keep them and their families safe they will demonstrate their good citizenship, commitment to playing their part and to continuing with their education in school.

**Hand Washing**

The promotion of handwashing continues to be critical. All children, young people and staff will wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol hand sanitiser, when:

* entering the building (or returning after lunchtime)
* before eating or handling food
* after blowing the nose
* after sneezing or coughing
* after going to the toilet
* when changing classroom
* prior to entering school transport

Aberdeen City Council have provided supplies of sanitiser for all classrooms and for wall mounted units at each pupil entrance to the school. Young people who wish to carry their own small bottle of hand sanitiser are very much encouraged to do so. Parents/carers should remind pupils about good hand hygiene at home. We will use induction time and posters displayed in all classes to also remind pupils when they are in school.

**Face Coverings**

The Scottish Government guidance is that staff and young people are not required to wear face coverings in school. However, given the local circumstances now we would be very appreciative if our seniors (S4-6) could give serious consideration to wearing of face coverings when in classes. This is something we will be discussing with staff and will be asking them to also give this serious consideration. Members of the senior management team have already taken the decision to wear face coverings in classes and meetings. The wearing of a face covering is primarily for the protection of others and is a social responsibility. If young people from any year group choose to wear a face covering they will be permitted to do so.

As with their uniform and PE kit we would ask that young people are considerate of others and do not wear face coverings that are likely to offend others.

**Access to Toilets**

Young people will be encouraged to access toilets only during breaks but we understand the need to avoid queues and crowds and so they will be allowed out of lessons if necessary one at a time. Young people should avoid congregating in toilets. They MUST wash their hands thoroughly for two minutes after using the toilet and then on return to class and sanitise their hands as a precaution.

**Enhanced Cleaning**

A full time cleaner will be in each school during the school day who will be able to take on enhanced cleaning duties such as the additional cleaning of non-teaching areas of the school.

**Uniform**

Pupils are expected to wear school uniform as follows - white shirt/blouse, black trousers/skirt, black jumper/cardigan, black shoes. Previously we advised pupils not to wear a tie or blazer. However, the guidance has been revised and so pupils will be able to wear a tie and a blazer because the guidance states that normal laundry routines should be sufficient. We are aware that some families may not have had time for shopping and purchase of ties. These are available from Abstitch – see details on school website. We will be glad to see all our pupils back in full uniform from 12 August but to allow for those who have not been able to purchase ties we will have a grace period until **Tuesday 22 September by which time we will expect all pupils to attend in full uniform**. As previously blazers are expected for all S5 and 6 pupils but may also be worn by pupils in any other year group. As explained on the website the blazers are fitted and tailored for size for each young person.

**PE Kit**

On days when pupils have Physical Education, they should come to school dressed in PE kit. This applies to all year groups as PE changing rooms will be out of use until further notice. As always football kits, offensive logos or overly revealing clothing should not be worn but any other suitable sports kit is acceptable. Layers would be most appropriate: weather permitting PE will be outdoors whenever possible and so young people should be suitably dressed for our climate.

**Journey to and from School**

Young people are encouraged, where it is possible and safe, to walk or cycle to school. Bike racks are available. Pupils who travel to school by service bus must wear face coverings as mandated by the Scottish Government and observe physical distancing guidelines in line with Scottish Government guidance in place in August.

School transport pupils will be dropped off in the rear car park. S1 pupils will be met by school staff on their induction day and on Monday 17 August. As in class we would appreciate senior pupils giving serious consideration to the wearing of face coverings on the school bus. All pupils are required to sanitise their hands before going onto the school bus – this is a parental responsibility in the morning. We suggest that all young people carry a small bottle of hand sanitiser with them each day and use this before going onto the bus. At the end of the school day they can do the same. In addition, we are sourcing a mobile hand-sanitiser which will be outside at the end of the school day and will allow pupils to sanitise their hands before going on the bus.

Please note that parents/carers are not permitted in the school grounds to drop off or pick up their child(ren). Pupils should be dropped off and picked up outside school grounds. The school car parks will not be available for parents/carers.

**Arrival at School**

Pupils will be required to use hand sanitiser which is available inside each of the entrances that year groups have been allocated. See interactive map on school website. There will be no registration, pupils will go straight to their period 1 class and pupils will be advised during their briefing on the induction day of the time they should arrive at school.

**In Class**

Pupils must bring their own materials (including pens, pencils, rulers, etc) to class and make sure that they leave nothing behind at the end of the lesson. Resource packs will be provided by subjects as appropriate. School Lockers will be in use but should not be shared. Pupils must use hand sanitiser on entering each classroom. When leaving a classroom, pupils will wipe down their desk, chair, and any surface they have touched. Cleaning materials will be provided for this purpose in each classroom. There will be a clear line in each class which will allow teachers to remain 2m apart from pupils. We expect pupils to comply with this. As previously stated, we would very much appreciate pupils wearing face coverings in class.

**Break and Lunchtime**

Break and lunch times will be staggered to avoid large crowds gathering. During the induction week there will be no facility for young people to purchase food but young people will not be in school over lunch time. They should bring their own clear water bottle filled with water and this should continue when they return full time. Water fountains will not be in use at any time until further notice. There is a leaflet on the school website detailing canteen arrangements from 17 August which will be a packed lunch only and with a full service from 24 August. There will be no provision for breakfast. Free school meal vouchers will continue until Friday 14 August. Pupils will have no access to the local shops at break as they are required to stay on school grounds during this time. Young people must therefore bring their own snacks for morning break. S2 – S6 pupils will be able to access the local shops at lunch time but must bear in mind that they will have to follow rules for face coverings and 2m social distancing, as we all do, if they decide to do this. They can eat their own packed lunch in the canteen but we cannot provide facilities for them to consume food purchased off site in school. S1 pupils will not be permitted to go to local shops at lunch time and will therefore require a packed lunch from home or school canteen for week beginning 17 August. As we will be staggering access to the canteen young people will be encouraged to eat their lunch and then go outside. They should therefore ensure they have a jacket. All pupils S1-S6 who are able to go home for lunch can continue to do so.

**Parental Communication with the School**

Parents/carers are not permitted in the school grounds or buildings unless by prior appointment. If a parent/carer wishes to talk to a member of school staff, they should email the school in the first instance bridgeofdon@aberdeencity.gov.uk There will be a notice on the front door of the school with these same details. It will not be possible to meet with parents/carers who arrive in school without prior appointments.

**Pupil Behaviour**

It is essential that all our young people adhere to social distancing rules in place and we expect the highest standards of behaviour. We cannot waste learning and teaching time. During lessons, teachers will be engaged in direct teaching and supporting learning activities so that young people can make appropriate progress following this long period of remote learning. Any young person engaging in persistent disruptive behaviour or not adhering to social distancing rules will be subject to the school’s positive behaviour policy and if unable to modify their approach may be asked to work from home. This is for the health, safety and wellbeing of all in school and to ensure we are able to maximise learning time. We understand that it will take some time for young people to adapt to in-school learning and we are working with our staff and to ensure that we have suitable learning activities in place.

**Pupil Attendance at School and Absence from school**

It will not be possible to provide digital learning for young people who choose not to attend school. However, if your child is absent from school due to illness or because of the need to isolate until a test can be completed, as always, we will do our best to support their learning. Please report all absences to school as quickly as possible using the school email address. To monitor the outbreak in Aberdeen close attention will be paid to our attendance data and so it will be imperative that we are able to record accurate reasons for pupil absence. You will be asked several questions when you phone or email to report a pupil absence. We would ask for your patience and co-operation with this process.

**Pupil Health and Wellbeing**

Young people’s health and wellbeing will be as much of a priority as their academic progress next session. As a school we will continue to work on what needs to be in place to support young people’s mental wellbeing, relationships, and resilience. Our priority will be to assess the needs of our young people and respond to those needs.

I understand that this has been a particularly challenging and difficult time for young people and their families and for some more than others. We will continue to work to support our young people and their families in the somewhat uncertain times that are coming. In the meantime, I hope that you have all been able to have some time to rest and relax together over the summer holiday period and we look forward to welcoming all our pupils back to school next week.

Yours sincerely



Daphne McWilliam

Head Teacher