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PB/ed
4 March 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

Return, Restore, Reset Phase 2 - Phased Return to In-Person Learning

As per the First Minister's statement given to Parliament on Tuesday 2nd March 2021, all secondary pupils will be given some time in school between Monday 15th March and the Easter break, with a full return after the Easter break. (Monday 19th April 2021)

Ellon Academy's Rationale for Return to School:

- To support the transition back to full-time schooling
- To maintain the provision for keyworker children and vulnerable learners
- To support learners to readjust to the school environment
- To ensure that learning continues towards national qualifications in the Senior Phase under the 2021 Alternative Certification Model
- To support learners' health and wellbeing

Here are the Aberdeenshire Council guidelines set out by the Director of Education and Children's Services, Mr Laurence Findlay, by which schools will plan for Phase 2 of the Return to School from Monday 15.3.21:

- Each school will decide on the number of pupils who can be in school each day based on available accommodation, staffing availability, transport availability and other constraints.
- Each school will have flexibility to deliver what is best for their learners based on the 2m physical distancing requirement. It should be noted, however, that only one third of the overall school roll is likely to be able to be accommodated in the school building at any given time given the 2m physical distancing requirement. For example, a 900-student school will be able to accommodate no more than 300 young people at any given time. Furthermore, some schools will have an imbalance in numbers across different year groups which will exacerbate the timetabling challenges they face.
- This should not be perceived as a full time return to school. The First Minister indicated that she hoped to be able to announce a full time return after Easter. Given the 2m physical distancing requirements, any time in school between 15th March and the end of term will be minimal. There are only 14 school days between 15th March and the end of term. The term ends on Thursday 1st April and Term 4 starts on Monday 19th April.
- Priority will continue to be given to senior phase students working towards SQA and other qualifications.

- Further to the senior phase students, schools will prioritise the groups of learners they bring back into school based on their tracking and monitoring to date, for example, those pupils who have practical elements to complete for SQA certification.
- Further guidance about remote learning delivery will be forthcoming in the new guidance as clearly more staff will now be needed in school settings and as such will not necessarily be available to support the remote learning. Schools will do what they can to continue supporting remote learning, including signposting to nationally developed materials, but the availability to support remote learning will be greatly constrained by the requirement for more staff to physically be in school.
- We will work with schools to augment in school learning with an appropriate outdoor learning and health and wellbeing package to support learner wellbeing where we have available staffing and facilities.
- On school transport, one metre social distancing will be in place in line with the arrangements for public transport. As such, there will be constraints on transport availability, and we will work with our colleagues in the Council's transport team to consider how best these constraints can be addressed.
- Face masks will require to be worn at all times in secondary schools and on all school transport.
- At Ellon Academy, there will be no expectation for school uniform for the last 3 weeks of term, but all going well, we expect all learners to be in uniform after the Easter break. More information regarding provision for Physical Education will be forthcoming prior to the Easter holidays.

Current situation:

Ellon Academy staff are meeting together and working on the following to implement this plan for the last 3 weeks (14 school days) of term:

- A timetable which will show which days learners will be expected in school
- A plan to ensure that Senior Phase pupils (S4/5/6) can maximise this opportunity in school to experience as many of their courses in-person
- A plan to ensure our Broad General pupils (S1/2/3) can experience in-school learning and a health and wellbeing input
- A continued model to support remote learning at home provision
- To consider and implement how provision for ASL Hub pupils, keyworker children and vulnerable learners' provision dove-tails with the whole school return plan
- Rooming and accommodation to meet with the 2-meter distancing requirements
- The implementation of face coverings for all learners, apart from those who are exempt
- A plan for Senior Phase pupils to collect optional self-test kits prior to Monday 15.3.21
- Liaison with transport providers
- Liaison with catering facilities
- Liaison with cleaning staff
- Liaison with North East College for those senior pupils who have NESCOL courses on their timetables

- A clear communication strategy for staff, pupils and parents/carers

When all of the above comes together, we will communicate this to parents/carers prior to the return to school from Monday 15th March.

Thank you for your continued patience and understanding,

Yours sincerely

P Buchan

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Rector