



Our Ref: PB/ar  
11 March 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

## **Return to School Plans from Monday 15.3.21**

### **Ellon Academy Rationale**

Firstly, thanks to all parents and carers for your continued support and patience over the past year, in what has been the most challenging time in our society and potentially in our lives so far. However, we are greatly looking forward to welcoming pupils back to school from Monday 15 March, albeit part-time for the last 3 weeks of term, but in the longer term, back full time after the Easter break.

As per Scottish Government and Local Authority guidelines, over the past week, staff at Ellon Academy have been working hard to fulfil the requirements for the return of pupils to the school building wherever possible, taking into account our capacity for 2 metre distancing, sufficient teaching areas and the significant challenges for teaching staff to continue to deliver remote learning, to supervise the provision for keyworker and vulnerable learners and to provide quality in-school face-to-face lessons for pupils. As you will see from our plans below, we have prioritised our Senior Phase (S4/5/6) learners preparing for national qualification assessments, with an overarching ethos of *'Quality over Quantity'* to ensure a meaningful learning and teaching experience when they access school. In doing so we have faced many challenges, but by working together, we have been able to find solutions, but no plan is 100% perfect as we hope you will understand.

### Challenges:

- The late arrival of back-to-school guidance from the Scottish Government
- 7/8 pupils per classroom allowing for 2 metre social distancing, therefore we have had to use classrooms and larger spaces throughout the school
- The careful measuring and setting out of these spaces by our janitorial team
- Having to split classes across different rooms means that one teacher per class will not suffice, so we have had to deploy more subject specialist teachers to cover the split venues
- Factoring in part-time teaching staff within the timetable and the specific days that they work
- Ensuring equity of provision in that all senior phase pupils experience all of their certificate subjects over the course of a week for the 3 weeks
- Huge numbers of senior pupils who study Maths and English and the challenges of this for venues and staffing – e.g., 99 pupils doing Higher English – only 6 available English Teachers
- The use of resources like projectors/screens in larger teaching venues
- Liaising with catering and cleaning staff regarding differing daily routines, including numbers of pupils in school each day and their learning venues
- Liaising with school transport to ensure 1 metre distancing and enough buses on any given day to accommodate this requirement
- Adjusting registration arrangements because our Managing Information System (Seemis) will not cope with a different 3-week timetable, so therefore having to revert to paper registration for the last 3 weeks of term

### Process:

- Principal Teacher short-term Working Group
  - Senior Leadership, Principal Teacher and Parent Council Office Bearers testing and interrogation of our plans, looking for anomalies and inconsistencies
  - Teaching Unions consultation and agreement
  - Sharing draft plans with Aberdeenshire Secondary Head Teachers' Association (ASHTA), Quality Improvement Officer and Head of Service
  - Consultation with and briefing all staff
  - Liaison with support staff (Admin, Pupil Support Workers, Pupil Support Assistants, Catering, Technicians, Janitors, Cleaning and Transport)
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### **Specific Information for BGE S1/2/3 Pupils**

The rationale for the return of S1/2/3 pupils during the last 3 weeks of term is to:

- Provide safe opportunities to re-connect with the school environment
- Provide safe opportunities to re-engage with teachers and peers
- Boost learning with face-to-face teaching from subject specialists
- Provide opportunities to consider health and wellbeing
- Prepare for the anticipated full return to school after the Easter break on Monday 19.4.21
- Registration
  - To minimise pupil movement around the school, morning registration will be outside in the Plaza at 8.20am for S1/2/3 pupils. Pupils should try to arrive just before 8.20am and ensure they are wearing outer jackets suitable for potential inclement weather
  - Pupils will then be told where their House Zones are and will be directed to proceed to these rooms by staff on duty who will stagger entry to the school, class by class
  - Paper registers will also be taken at all changes of class/venue during the day and parents/carers will be notified of absences by text message, as per usual practice
  - On-line registration will continue for S1/2/3 on any days they are not in school and parents will be alerted in any unexplained absence by early afternoon
- **S1/2/3 Timetable:**
  - Tuesday 16.3.21 - S1 Pupils all day
  - Tuesday 23.3.21 - S2 Pupils all day
  - Tuesday 30.3.21 - S3 Pupils all day
- **S1/2/3 Morning:**

Staff will come to pupil House Zones to deliver the following:

  - Literacy Boost
  - Numeracy Boost
  - Humanities Boost
  - Health and Wellbeing Boost
  - Mental Wellbeing Boost

- **S1/2/3 Afternoon:**
  - Outdoor wellbeing and active fun session
  - Option for inside provision
- **Accommodation:**
  - Pupils will be allocated to their House zones on arrival in the Plaza
  - These House Zones include the follows areas in school:
    - Canteen, Sunken Social Area, Games Hall, Gym A, Gym B, Theatre, Library, Humanities Open Learning Area and the Maths Open Learning Area
    - Teachers will rota around the House Zones to minimise pupil movement around the school

#### **Remote Learning:**

- Remote learning will continue for S1/2/3 pupils for the days they are not in school in the run up to the Easter holidays. Teachers may not be able to be as responsive during this period due to the requirement to also deliver face-to-face lessons
- As per Aberdeenshire Council communication and union advice, the amount of Remote Learning and feedback will be reduced given the challenge of the complexity of the phased return.

#### **Keyworker/Vulnerable Pupils:**

Keyworker/Vulnerable pupil provision will continue for S1/2/3 pupils Monday – Friday, and they will be relocated to rooms S1, S5 and S47. However, on the days their peers are in school for a whole day:

- S1 Keyworker/Vulnerable pupils will join the whole school provision on Tues 16.3.21
- S2 Keyworker/Vulnerable pupils will join the whole school provision on Tues 23.3.21
- S3 Keyworker/Vulnerable pupils will join the whole school provision on Tues 30.3.21
- S4/5/6 Keyworker Vulnerable pupils will only be asked to attend on the days when their year groups are in school for direct teaching. Therefore, there will be no S4/5/6 Keyworker/Vulnerable pupil provision for the last 3 weeks of term. If this causes parents/carers concern, please contact the respective Guidance Teacher for your child's/children's House.

#### **Specific Information for S4/5/6 Senior Phase**

##### Rationale for Return:

- Prioritising S4/5/6 pupils preparing for assessment for National Qualifications
- To provide quality over quantity teaching input from subject specialist staff
- To provide opportunities for S4/5/6 pupils to meet with their teachers, peers and Guidance Teachers to support mental health, wellbeing and reassurance in learning
- To prepare for the anticipated return to school after the Easter break on Mon 19.4.21

## Registration

- Registration for S4/5/6 pupils will happen in each class they attend on their days in school apart from Maths and English on a Friday afternoon and because of numbers, pupils will register in the Plaza at the end of lunchtime to stagger the entry to teaching areas
- There is no longer a requirement for S4/5/6 pupil to register at home on the days they are not in school

## Timetable:

- S5/6 a minimum of 1 double period of each certificate subject every week
- S4 – 1 double period of each certification subject every week
- The letters in the table correspond to the Column your child's subject is in, so S4/5/6 pupils should check their Google Classrooms for more details of when their different subjects are on the timetable below
- E.g., **S5/6 D** means 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Year pupils in Column D periods 1/2/3 on Monday below:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Comments
<b>Mon</b>	S5/6 D	S5/6 D	S5/6 D	Break/PTG Appointments	S5/6 E	S5/6 E	S5/6 E	Only S5/6 in school
	Normal TT Wed P1/2/3				Normal TT - Tues P3/4			
<b>Tues</b>	S1/2/3 Experience							S1 – 16.3.21 S2 – 23.3.21 S3 – 30.3.21
<b>Wed</b>	S5/6 A	S5/6 A	S5/6 C	S5/6 C	S5/6 B	S5/6 B		Only S5/6 in school
	Normal TT Mon P1/2		Normal TT Mon P3/4		Normal TT Mon 5/6			
<b>Thurs</b>	S4 C	S4 C	S4 D	S4 D	S4 E	S4 E		Only S4 in school
	Normal TT Mon P1/2		Normal TT Mon 6/7		Normal TT Fri 5/6			
<b>Fri</b>	S4 F	S4 F	S4 G	S4 G	S4 Maths and English	S4 Maths and English		Only S4 in school
	Normal TT Wed P3/4		Normal TT Wed P5/6		All S4 pupils			

### Accommodation:

- Pupils will attend lessons which have been set up with 2 metre social distancing in mind.
- There will be a range of venues including the various faculty classrooms and/or larger school spaces like the Games Hall for example.
- All classrooms have a maximum capacity of 7/8 pupils.
- To support your understanding of the accommodation challenges, here is an idea of the 2 metre distancing capacity of our larger spaces:
  - Games Hall max capacity - 90 pupils
  - Gym A and Gym B max capacity - A - 37 pupils B - 37 pupils
  - Sunken Social Area max capacity - 18 pupils
  - Canteen max capacity - 20 pupils
  - Library - 25 pupils
  - Maths Open Learning Area - 15 pupils
  - Humanities Open Learning Area - 9 pupils

### **Remote Learning:**

- Remote learning will continue on the days that your child/children are not in school, but the capacity for marking and feedback will be reduced because staff will be in school delivering face-to-face teaching. As per Aberdeenshire Council communication and union advice, the amount of Remote Learning and feedback will be reduced given the challenge of the complexity of the phased return.

### **NESCOL Courses, Work Related Learning and S6 Study**

- Pupils working on NESCOL remote learning or Work Related Learning and pupils who have S6 study courses have 2 options:
  - To work remotely in school in designated study areas
  - To sign out of school and go home

More information about college provision will follow in a separate letter

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## General Information for all pupils:

### Transport:

- Liaison with the Aberdeenshire Transport Unit has been completed
- Additional buses/taxis will be used to accommodate 1 metre social distancing on board
- Usual pick-up/drop-off times in the morning and after school will apply

### The School Day:

The table below is a reminder of the timings of the school day at Ellon Academy:

ASL (G7 Hub) pupils will continue to have lunch at 12.00pm, prior to the rest of the school population.

	Reg	1	2	Break	3	4	5	Lunch	6	7	Home
	8.25	8.35	9.25	10.15	10.30	11.20	12.10	1.00	1.50	2.40	3.30pm
Monday											
Tuesday											
	Reg	1	2	Break	3	4	Lunch	5	6	Home	
	8.25	8.35	9.25	10.15	10.30	11.20	12.10	1.00	1.50	2.40	
Wednesday											
Thursday											
Friday											

### Health and Safety:

- Sanitising stations
  - Will be located at entrances/exits to school and in every teaching area
  - Keyworker/Vulnerable/ASL Hub (G7) pupils to enter via the main foyer entrance as per current arrangements
  - All other pupils will register and enter on a staggered basis via the Pupil Doors and this will be managed by staff on duty
- Social Distancing
  - All classrooms and larger school spaces have been re-aligned to take 2 metre distancing into account when moving around the school at social times and in between lessons
- Cleaning
  - As previously, our team of cleaners will be working prior to school, during the school day and after school to ensure all venues, toilets and touch points are thoroughly cleaned.
  - Pupils will be asked to wipe their desks/seats in their learning venue as per previous practice
  - Our one-way system will still be operational as previously

- Face Coverings
  - It has been recommended by the Scottish Government that all pupils/staff wear face coverings at all times during the school day. The previous medical exemptions for pupils will still apply. Staff at Ellon Academy have been reassured that it is our expectation that all pupils (apart from those who are medically exempt) will wear their face coverings at all time to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all
  - Pupils who need specific ASL support resources, such as speech to text software do not need to use a face covering whilst using this equipment
  - If any of this is a concern for you and your child/children, please get in touch to discuss with your child's Principal Teacher of Guidance to discuss alternative solutions
  - We will discuss the implications of non-compliance with individual pupils and their families if necessary
  
- Covid Self-Test Kits
  - S4/5/6 pupils will be able to collect self-testing kits today/tomorrow if they wish to participate and if consent has been received, prior to the return to school from Monday 15.3.21. Letters/consent forms have been sent to parents/carers regarding this today, Thurs 11.3.21.
  
  - S1/2/3 pupils will also have the opportunity to receive self-test kits if they so wish for self-testing after the Easter break. Letters/consent forms will be sent home today.
    - Prior to the Easter break, S1/2/3 pupils will be able to pick up their optional test kits when they are in school on Tuesdays:
      - Test Kit Pick Up for S1/2/3 – between 12.10/1pm
        - S1 – Tues 16.3.21
        - S2 – Tues 23.3.21
        - S3 – Wed 30.3.21
  
  - Impact of results of Lateral Flow Test Kits:
    - *"If my child has a positive Test, what should I do"?*
      - Call and arrange a PCP test to confirm +ve result
      - If +ve, self-isolate at home for 10 days (it is recommended that siblings/parents/carers self-isolate at home too until Test and Protect deem close contact status)
      - If -ve, return to school
  
  - Pupils should not attend school at all if they have any symptoms related to Covid-19

- Social Times
  - Break time:
    - Pupils to bring their own snack/drink and eat outside or in the socially distanced zones if the weather is inclement
  - Lunchtime:
    - S1/2/3 are requested to bring a packed lunch for their day in school. This is to avoid the major challenge of 2 metre social distancing in canteen queues
    - S1/2/3 pupils will eat outside but contingency in-door space will be used if the weather is inclement
    - S4/5/6 access to the canteen will be staggered and pupils will be encouraged to eat outside or to use an indoor seat/table which is 2 metres from others if the weather is inclement
    - ASL Hub pupils will continue to access the canteen first at 12.00pm each day as they have been doing since January
    - Pupils entitled to Free School Meals will still be able to pick up their lunch in school
    - Generally, pupils to go outside but if weather is inclement, pupils can sit 2 metres apart in the designated areas. Hence the need for appropriate outer wear or a suitable jacket
    - Pupils will be permitted to go into Ellon to access local shops at lunchtimes but must abide by the mitigations of those establishments and be respectful to others and dispose of their own litter
  
- School Dress:
  - S1/2/3 pupils to wear comfortable, loose clothing and trainers so that they can participate in fun outdoor health activities during the afternoon
  - S4/5/6 pupils to wear casual clothing suitable for school
  - Classroom/teaching area doors and windows will be open for ventilation, so we recommend that all pupils come dressed in layers to regulate their temperature
  - We aim to reinstate school uniform after the summer break but pupils can continue to wear uniform from now if they so wish
  
- Reporting absences:
  - Please report any pupil absences or planned appointments in the usual way, by calling the school in the morning to let us know
  - We will endeavour to post any missed work on Google Classroom
  
- Coming Prepared for School:
  - S1/2/3 – should come to school with Maths/English jotters/books and have their own pens/pencils etc to minimise the sharing of resources
  - S4/5/6 – having checked Google Classroom to find out which subjects are on which days; senior learners should ensure they come to school with the jotters/books and equipment they require for each subject they will have on any one day
  - All pupils should have adequate outerwear for outdoor break and lunchtimes



### **Keyworker/Vulnerable Hub Pupils**

Keyworker/Vulnerable pupil provision will continue for S1/2/3 pupils Monday – Friday but not for S4/5/6.

S1/2/3 KWV Hub pupils will now register each morning in their HUB rooms, and not in the Games Hall as previously. These rooms will now be

S1 – Room S1                      S2 – Room S47                      S3 – Room S5.

However, on the days their peers are in school for a whole day:

- S1 Keyworker/Vulnerable pupils will join the whole school provision on Tues 16.3.21
- S2 Keyworker/Vulnerable pupils will join the whole school provision on Tues 23.3.21
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- Therefore, there will be no S4/5/6 Keyworker/Vulnerable pupil provision for the last 3 weeks of term. If this causes parents/carers concern, please contact the respective Guidance Teacher for your child's/children's House.

We understand that there are so many factors to consider in order to get pupils back to school under the current restrictions, but we feel that our plan will support the learning and wellbeing of our pupils and we look forward to seeing them all over the next 3 school weeks in the lead up to the Easter break.

Yours sincerely

*P Buchan*

Pauline Buchan

Rector