



## October 2020 Autumn Newsletter



Dear Parents and Carers

I hope you are all well. As we approach the end of the first term of the session I am writing with an update on what has been a term like no other.

### NEW ROUTINES

Firstly I would like to recognise and congratulate our young people and staff for taking on board their responsibilities in keeping everyone safe by following our new routines and procedures. They have really risen to the challenges we have all faced in keeping to the safety measures. Whether that be regular hand hygiene and sanitising, keeping to the one way system, regular wipe down of work stations, keeping to the year group pupil zones and of course the wearing of face coverings in corridors, we should all be proud of how everyone has responded. Of course an important message that we all need to continue to reinforce is that we cannot get complacent and as the increase in numbers across the country shows we need to keep going with all of these mitigations to allow schools to remain open in a safe manner. Your support in reinforcing these measures through discussion with your children is much appreciated.

### COVID 19 Symptoms Reminder

Procedures should pupils, staff or household members display symptoms

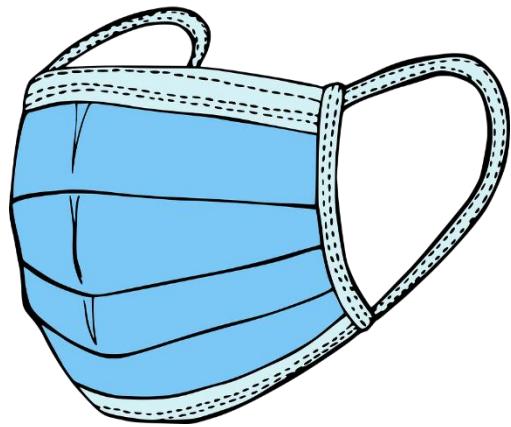
**Pupil or staff should NOT attend school if the following applies:**

- **they are displaying any of the COVID 19 symptoms (a high temperature, a new continuous cough, a loss or change in sense of smell or taste)**
- **they are required to self-isolate for 14 days if a member of the household has tested positive or is displaying symptoms**
- **they have been contacted as part of the Test and Protect programme**
- **Medical advice states that they should not attend school**

Should this be the case please contact the school on **01307 492200** to let us know.

## **Face Coverings**

The vast majority of our pupils are remembering their face coverings each morning and wearing them in the corridors and communal areas. A small number of pupils are regularly forgetting them in the morning and being provided with disposable masks by the school. We would be grateful if you could continue to remind your children of the importance of remembering their face covering, the need to wear in at all times in busy areas and their responsibility to help keep others safe in this way. All of our S1 pupils will soon be making their own masks in Home Economics so they will have no excuse!



## **Arriving at School**

Our procedures for arriving at school in the morning have been working very well and have reduced congestion in the morning. Pupils should not arrive at school before **8:40am** and are not able to access the school before then. As we move towards the colder weather next term please remind your children of this as we want to avoid pupils waiting outside of the school before this time in bad weather. Similarly a reminder that if S2-S6 pupils choose to have lunch off campus next term they should not return to the school before 2:05pm so please encourage them to dress for potential colder weather. S1 will continue to stay on the school campus for lunchtime next term.

## **Ventilation in Classrooms**

As part of the school risk assessment for reopening we need to ensure as much ventilation as possible in classrooms. This means leaving windows open as much as possible and will result in classrooms being cooler than normal. With the colder weather next term please encourage your children to dress appropriately for this issue and come to school wearing warmer clothing.

## **Covid 19 Support Funding**

The school was successful in receiving £5000 funding to support families who may be experiencing additional financial hardship due to Covid 19.

This funding is open to any family who meets the criteria. It can be used for the following purposes:

- To provide food vouchers for families and pupils who are required to self-isolate and would have an added challenge of meeting food costs due to self-isolating
- To cover school payments for subjects such as Home Economics and Design & Technology where a family is experiencing financial hardship
- To provide vouchers for outdoor or warm clothes for school to help during the colder weather and cooler classrooms due to the need for additional ventilation
- Other support as agreed by the school

Any request will be treated confidentially. **Just contact the school and ask to speak to your child's Pupil Care and Support teacher and they will help you access this funding.** It is there to be used so please do not hesitate to contact us about this.

## **MOBILE PHONES IN CLASS**

Some teachers have reported an increase in pupils using mobile phones in class this term. This may be as a result of pupils having a higher level of access during lockdown. Next term we will be reinforcing the **Forfar 4** rule of mobile phones away in class time unless instructed to use them for learning purposes by the class teacher. Again, please remind your children of this important rule to ensure we are all focused on learning in class time.



## **SQA UPDATE**

Following the Scottish Government decision to ensure all pupils received the refined estimate that schools submitted as their final grade all of last sessions Senior Phase pupils should have received their new certificates with corrected results. We are still awaiting advice and guidance from the SQA and Scottish Government regarding assessment arrangements for national qualifications this session. We have been told this should be due in the next couple of weeks following both SQA consultation and an independent review of the process last session. At the moment our teachers are planning for different scenarios that may come out of this and are generating evidence to support any future decisions about pupil attainment and achievement. As soon as we have the national guidance on arrangements for this session we will let pupils and parents know as soon as possible.

## S2 OUTWARD BOUND WEEK



One of the highlights of the term has been our first S2 Outward Bound week.

Pre-Covid we had planned to send all of our S2 pupils to a residential outward bound experience in Aviemore. While Covid put paid to the residential aspect we decided to bring the activities to the pupils



at school. So over the last week S2 pupils have been Coasteering in Arbroath, Rock Climbing in Kirriemuir, Canoeing on Forfar Loch and hiking in Glen Clova and Glen Doll.

This was an ambitious undertaking and Mrs Goss and Mr Howat worked hard to make sure all activities were Covid safe. It was an amazing week with the S2 pupils returning from their activities excited by what they had achieved. They were taken out of their comfort zone, had to work effectively as part of Teams and for one day were able to forget about the daily virus related challenges we all face. It was also a day without mobile phones!



Thanks to all of the staff who accompanied the pupils on their activities and a massive well done to the pupils for exemplifying the school values in such a positive manner.

## **S1 IN A NUTSHELL**

This term we would normally have invited our S1 Parent and Carers to meet with subject teachers and some S1 pupils for our S1 In A Nutshell event. This is designed to give Parents and Carers a clearer idea about what our S1 pupils study during the year and advice about how best to support their children in their learning in S1. For obvious reasons this year we have produced a virtual S1 in a Nutshell. If you haven't accessed it yet it is still live on the school website and it is a fantastic resources for our S1 parents. You'll find it at the following address or click on the parents tab of the school website:

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/an/forfaracademy/parents/s1-in-a-nutshell/>

## **SCHOOL TRIP REFUNDS**

We have been working away through refunding parents for the trips we have unfortunately had to cancel. Where we have received full refunds from companies this is reasonably straight forward. Where companies have chosen not to refund deposits we have put in insurance claims to try and recover the deposits but this inevitably takes more time. Please be reassured we are working to get refunds back to parents as soon as we can.

## **UPDATING THE SCHOOL ABOUT CHANGE OF DETAILS**

As always please contact the school should there be a change of contact details, new mobile phone contacts or changes to email addresses. This is all the more important now as we reduce paper communication and increase electronic communication to parents and carers. It is also very important that we hold up to date contact details in the case where a pupil may be showing symptoms of COVID 19 and we need to contact you to pick up your child quickly.

## **AMENDMENT TO HOLIDAYS 2020-21**

Approval was given at the most recent Children and Learning Committee to alter the school holiday calendar for session 2020-21. This amendment is to accommodate the extra day holiday agreed for all Angus Council Employees at a Full Angus Council meeting on 10 September 2020. The day will be taken as two half days at the end of the autumn and summer terms. The dates are as follows:

- Wednesday 23 December 2020 - school closes at 1200 hours
- Thursday 24 June 2021- school closes at 1200 hours

## IMPORTANT DATES FOR TERM 2



<b>Monday 19<sup>th</sup> October</b>	Term 2 starts
<b>Friday 30<sup>th</sup> October</b>	S1 tracking report 1 issued
<b>Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> October</b>	S2 tracking report 1 issued
<b>Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> October</b>	S5/S5/S6 tracking report 2 issued
<b>Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December</b>	In-service Day
<b>Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> December</b>	In-service Day
<b>Friday 4<sup>th</sup> December</b>	St Andrews Day Holiday
<b>Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> December</b>	S3 tracking report 1 issued
<b>Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> December</b>	Last day of term – school finishes at 12:00

Kas Mohamed

Head Teacher