



## **1. General Update**

### **Lockers**

Installation of around one hundred lockers will take place during the October week. Locker keys will be issued thereafter.

### **Face Coverings (School Transport and when in School)**

Face coverings are not being worn with the regularity we would like. We fully accept and recognise that a very small number of pupils have a genuine medical exemption which means that they do not need to wear a face covering. We are also aware of the fact that some families and pupils object to being asked to wear face coverings. We ask that these families consider the following:

- This is a place of work for staff, and staff have a right to expect that the risk assessment in place to allow the school to remain open can be actioned in the same way that staff in other settings also retain that right e.g. NHS staff, supermarket staff, taxi drivers etc.
- Inability of staff to appropriately supervise/assist pupils if pupils refuse to wear face coverings without an exemption
- Fact that some families are dealing with very serious ongoing health issues, meaning that children from those households are genuinely fearful of being in school, particularly where other pupils disregard requests to wear face masks
- Time taken away from other tasks when having to constantly remind pupils to wear face coverings
- Fact that the need to wear a face covering between periods equates to around 10 minutes per day
- Some pupils are wearing coverings on school transport but refusing to do so inside the school, which shows complete disregard for school staff and NHS guidance

### **Health and Safety/COVID**

Since the start of term, 14 staff and 135 pupils have been tested for COVID-19 with all results negative. During the same period, one member of staff and five pupils were instructed to self-isolate by the NHS test and protect team due to contact with positive cases outwith school.

There has been a marked drop in the number of pupils sent to our COVID room, but an increase in the number of cases where Test and Protect are either directly contacting staff/pupils or staff/pupils anticipate potential contact.

### **Staggered Break (post October week)**

As we move into late autumn and winter, it will no longer be possible to ask that young people routinely spend break time outdoors. It is also not possible to accommodate all pupils indoors at the same time during interval. As a result, we will stagger interval as follows:

S1 – S3 – No change, still 10.30am until 10.45am

S4 – S6 – Period 3 lesson starts at 10.30am and runs until 11.20am, interval from 11.20am until 11.35am

## **SQA 2021 Diet**

To date, we are still to receive clarity from either the SQA or Scottish Government in advance of the exam diet for this session.

## **INSIGHT Results Analysis 2020 Diet**

The Scottish Government has taken the decision to place on hold the release of school level attainment data for session 2019/20. As a result, it has not been possible to analyse our attainment against previous years. It seems unlikely that data for 2019/20 will be used for improvement purposes.

## **Standards and Qualities Report, Improvement Plan and PEF spend**

Both the school improvement plan and PEF spending plan are in draft format and will be finalised when our Working Time Agreement is in place. PEF plans will be shared at our next Parent Council meeting but are mainly an extension of decisions taken last session.

Our Standards and Qualities Report for session 2019/20 can be found here:

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/ea/public/stjosephsacademy/uploads/sites/2043/2020/09/17105928/SJA-East-Ayrshire-Establishment-Standards-and-Quality-Report-2019-20.pdf>

As you know, we were inspected during 2019/20 and the Summary of Inspection Findings (SIF) document supersedes internal quality assurance for last session. The SIF will inform improvement planning for the next few years, albeit less so this session given the ongoing focus on Health and Safety and the immediate need to ensure that learning and teaching can continue.

## **PE**

There is no indication that the government advice to deliver PE outdoors is likely to change. For this reason, young people should be prepared to participate in outdoor PE throughout winter. We would recommend that pupils consider bringing:

- Waterproof clothing (jacket is essential)
- Jacket with hood
- hat
- gloves
- change of socks
- change of footwear (not shoes worn to school)
- towel
- Separate bag to store clothing so it does not need to go back in to bags with jotters etc.

The school will support families where possible.

We continue to receive a small number of complaints about outdoor PE. We ask that parents/carers do not call the school to simply complain that PE is outdoors as the decision for PE to take place outdoors applies to all schools in Scotland.

## **Parents' Evenings**

There will be no face to face Parents' Evenings this side of Christmas. It is unlikely that there will be any face to face parents' evenings this academic year. We await clarity on the terms of the Working Time Agreement (WTA) for this session. It is noted that in a primary setting, telephone calls or similar are likely to be viable.

This is less viable in a secondary setting. School systems do not have webcams or microphones built in, so virtual meetings are also unlikely. Once we have clarity from WTA discussion at authority level we will consult on viable alternatives to parents' evenings.

### **School Trip Refunds**

The final batch of refunds to be issued for both the London and Paris trips are now in process, and we anticipate that all parents/carers will have been refunded by the end of the October week holiday. Each transaction must be refunded individually via ParentPay. It can take a few days for funds to clear between EAC and ParentPay, and then a few days again to action each individual refund.

### **Catering**

Young people must order online the day before they intend to use the canteen. Food is now served at break and lunch. If parents/carers or young people find that they are having difficulty using the system they should email: [preordermeals.enquiries@east-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:preordermeals.enquiries@east-ayrshire.gov.uk)

School and teaching staff are unable to resolve issues with the online catering portal.

### **Car Park Trial**

The car park trial proved successful in that it reduced congestion at the school entrance. However, it served to increase some issues at the primary end of the car park. We will feed back to EAC and Mitie in due course.

### **Reminder - Health and Safety**

A general overview of the health and safety measures in place, as well as a copy of the latest version of our risk assessment, can be found on our website.

Risk Assessment -

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/ea/public/stjosephsacademy/uploads/sites/2043/2020/09/30124008/COVID-19-Secondary-School-RA-St.Josephs.pdf>

General Overview –

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/ea/public/stjosephsacademy/uploads/sites/2043/2020/08/05075537/Re-Opening-Guidance-for-Pupils.pdf>

A group of staff meet regularly to feedback on Health and Safety as it relates to COVID and re-opening. Broadly, staff are happy with the situation as it stands and young people are to be commended for their excellent conduct.

### **Free School Meals**

Our overall Free School Meal uptake figure is down by at least four per cent. Staff are working hard to provide drop-ins where parents/carers can apply with the support of school staff. We anticipate that around 32% of families are entitled to free school meals where only 21% are currently registered.

### **Reminder Parental Responsibility – COVID Symptoms**

The following message was shared on our website last week. It is repeated here in case members of the Parent Forum use this report as a source of information.

*'Please remember that if your son/daughter has a temperature/fever, a persistent cough or a loss of their sense of taste or smell, you should not send them to school and should follow NHS advice. If you believe that your son/daughter has symptoms of COVID you should arrange for a test via the NHS.*

*If you have children at different schools, and one is off with COVID like symptoms, you must inform the other establishment too and should not send siblings into the other school for as long as symptoms persist or until a negative test is returned for the child exhibiting symptoms.*

*Pupils with any of the above symptoms in school will be sent home and parents/carers advised to follow NHS guidance. However, the school should not be put in a position where we are dealing with situations already known to parents/carers and where symptoms are clear e.g. sending a young person to school with a fever or persistent cough.*

*If sent home from school, school staff will follow up at the start and end of each school day to check in with the family.'*

I am happy to take questions on Health and Safety during our meeting.

## **2. Staffing**

The following appointments have been made since our last meeting:

PEF funded Hub Support Worker	Miss Ross (started last week)
PEF funded Hub Support Worker 0.6FTE	Miss Millar (start date TBC)
Teacher of Modern Languages	Miss Bernard (start date late October)

We await confirmation of the successful completion of pre-employment checks for a new classroom assistant (PEF funded) and should be able to advise of an outcome by the next meeting.

Mrs McCormack has taken on a six month secondment with the central education team. Mrs McCormack has worked within our office for the past fourteen years and we wish Mrs McCormack every success in her seconded post. I have no doubt that Mrs McCormack will prove to be an asset to the central team and wish to record my thanks for her excellent work over a number of years here.

In the interim, Mrs McMillan has agreed to take on Mrs McCormack's position and we will now look to backfill Mrs McMillan's substantive post. I am delighted that Mrs McMillan has agreed to take this post on.

Before our next meeting, Miss Pettigrew (IT Technician), Mrs Marshall (PT Pastoral Care) and Mrs Cunningham (PT Social Subjects) will all have started maternity leave. We wish all three and their wider families well at this joyful time.

IT are finalising arrangements for Miss Pettigrew's cover. Mrs A. Kelly and Miss Devanney will take on acting PT posts until Mrs Marshall and Mrs Cunningham return to school.