



1. General Update

COVID

We have recorded five pupil cases in six school days. Four of the five cases did not require school level contact tracing. This was largely due to the long weekend and ACM INSET days. One case did require tracing, and fifteen pupils as well as the young person to have tested positive are now self-isolating.

As you know, St. Andrew's Primary school was closed last week, and today, the Early Childhood Centre that is part of St. Andrew's was also closed.

Timetabling for session 2021/22

As mentioned during our last meeting, the timetable is scheduled to rollover to next session during the week beginning Monday 14th June.

Initially, this decision was taken to build in contingency time for ACM SQA certification. However, there are other reasons as to why timetable change was delayed. It should be noted that the vast majority of EAC schools are working to the same timescale, as are most schools nationally, with some not changing until August.

Other reasons include, but are not limited to:

- The need, at almost no notice, to create an interim timetable for a three-week period before Easter (thus taking away from time that would be spent creating the new timetable)
- P7 transition staffing, whereby S1-S6 are never all on site when transition events occur, and in turn, we can free staff to participate
- Additional ACM and Willowbank workload on top of NHS tracing and tracing that is not part of a normal school year at this time
- Lack of time usually allocated to awards, pupil council, staffing confirmation/recruitment, transitions, improvement planning and CLPL audit which normally fall within study leave (i.e., the time in a normal school year comes when S4-S6 are not in school, this year, there is no such time but no reduction in tasks)
- Health and Safety issues e.g., contact tracing requires up to date seating plans, which in turn depend upon accurate SEEMIS data and advance staff notice of all class groups, rooms and timings
- Exact staffing makeup for 2021/22 not confirmed at time when ACM assessment finished for those at N5, Higher and Advanced Higher level.
- Pressure around quality assurance of ACM grades (still ongoing at time of writing)
- While to many parents/carers, N5, Higher and Advanced Higher are the focus, there is a significant group of pupils for whom outstanding assessment at N3, N4 and unit level was necessary after the conclusion of our May Assessment diet
- Lack of clarity from SQA as to what is to be covered and assessed as part of next year's SQA courses
- Concern around stress, pressure, and workload across both the pupil and staff cohort, that could lead to burnout/too much pressure if starting courses at a more challenging level straight after the pressure of ACM assessment and while ACM marking, and quality assurance is ongoing

Attendance levels had dropped considerably on Monday 24th May, to extent that we felt we could not ignore the Health and Safety challenges that undeclared and unauthorised absence brings. As such, communication

went out to state that if parents/carers wished for their children to stay at home until timetable change, they should notify us of their decision.

School has remained open against the outgoing timetable for all and any current S4-S6 pupil who wishes to attend.

It is not practical to begin teaching new courses against the outgoing timetable for the following reasons.

- Not all pupils within an S4 group are taking that subject on
- The new S6 will often study none of the subjects they are timetabled for in S5
- You cannot simply apply this year's schematic to next year, as the column structure and period timings change year to year
- Not all pupils within an S4 group who are taking a subject on are doing so at the same level

Options

Communication was shared with all parents/carers over the weekend. The communication sent out covers all points related to options changes.

Staffing for session 2021/22

Mrs Burnett (PT Pastoral Care) was appointed to a seconded position with Education Scotland. Mrs Burnett will formally start with Education Scotland in mid-July and is due to return to St. Joseph's in February 2023.

Mrs Parker was the successful candidate to take on Mrs Burnett's post on an Acting basis until Mrs Burnett returns to us and will begin her new role in August.

Mrs Amanda Duthie will cover Mrs Lloyd's maternity leave as Acting PT of English from October 2021.

Mrs A. Kelly will continue to cover for Mrs Marshall (PT Pastoral Care) until Mrs Marshall returns from Maternity Leave in November 2021.

Mrs Cunningham (PT Social Subjects) will return from Maternity Leave in August 2021 and Miss Devanney will revert to her substantive class teacher post.

Mr Marr will return to us on a full-time basis in August following his two-day secondment with SQA.

A change in work patterns in Physics means that rather than having 1.5FTE available, we will have 1.0FTE available as of session 2021/22.

While not absolutely confirmed yet, it is likely we will welcome:

- NQT English x 2 (both maternity leave cover/backfill)
- NQT Music
- NQT Computing
- NQT PE (accumulated PEF surplus to continue to facilitate AP Base provision)
- NQT History

There is a possibility that we may be allocated one additional NQT in Chemistry.

We have advertised:

- Teacher of History with Support for Learning (1 year contract)

- Maternity Leave backfill cover in Modern Languages (until November 2021)

We will shortly advertise:

- Teacher of Maths (1 year contract)

The following staff will leave St. Joseph's Academy at the end of this session.

- Mrs Lightfoot – Classroom Assistant (retiral)
- Mrs Kirk – Teacher of Support for Learning (retiral)
- Miss McComb – Teacher of Chemistry – Has secured a post at Lenzie Academy
- Mrs Forbes – Teacher of Support for Learning (end of contract)
- Mrs Fulton – Teacher of Geography – Moving to Doon Academy for session 21/22
- Mr Templeton – Teacher of Maths – End of NQT year – Has secured a post at Castle Douglas Academy
- Mr Gray – Teacher of History – End of NQT year
- Mr McLaughland – Teacher of PE – End of NQT year
- Mr Reid – Teacher of Computing – End of NQT year - Has secured a post at Kirkcudbright Academy
- Mr Macdonald – Teacher of History – End of backfill for Mr Marr
- Miss Bernard – Teacher of Modern Languages – Backfilling Mrs A Kelly, while Mrs Kelly acts up for Mrs Marshall - Has secured a post with Glasgow City Council

I would like to put on record my sincere thanks to the colleagues listed above for many years of accumulative service to the families of our school community.

In addition, one of our Art teachers and one of our Technical teachers may move to another EAC school in advance of, or during, session 2021/22.

Willowbank Consultation

The consultation runs until Friday 25th June. This afternoon, East Ayrshire Council released a questionnaire for parents/carers as well as a similar questionnaire for staff. Planning around pupil focus groups is ongoing, with this likely to happen in school during the final week of term. The link to the Parental Questionnaire is:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=oyzTzM4Wi0KVQTctawUZKXJxeSTtZJGjh-eXLJELi9URDVR09OOEINUzJHSlDXMFJFUIA3UTVKRy4u>

P7 Transitions

Transition Visits are ongoing, and mainly involve a socially distanced tour and outdoor activity. Pupils will meet their Pastoral Care teacher, Mr Boyle and PC Dempster. Visits must take place in primary school groups, with no mixing across groups. Pupils joining from non-associated schools will visit only with peers joining us from the same non-associated school.

Award Ceremonies

Mrs Shearer and Miss Pioli continue to work on digital award ceremonies for BGE pupils.

Pupil Leadership Elections

Elections for all but S1 pupils will take place this side of summer. Mr Douglas Thomson will represent the Parent Council during this year's interview process.

School Calendar 2021/22, Improvement Planning, Standards and Qualities Reports and PEF Allocation

As you know, the school calendar depends upon the completion of Working Time Agreements (WTA). Current national guidance is that WTA discussion take place early in session 21/22. Without WTA sign off, we cannot issue a calendar. However, planning is underway in this respect with two draft calendars and WTA currently a work in progress. It is hoped that professional associations will have sight of both drafts this side of summer. One calendar will include Parents' Evenings, the other the model utilised this session. However, it should be noted that we can plan around an interim report schedule from September rather than from November as was the case last session.

As with WTA's, School Improvement Planning and Standards and Qualities Reporting has also been pushed back to session 21/22 to take account of current workload around the ACM. PEF planning is part of the improvement planning process.

There is a draft School Improvement Plan at the time of writing. This plan will be shared with teaching staff in August, and parents/carers at the first meeting of the new session.

2. SQA Update

A draft letter will be shared with Parent Council members this evening. The letter will detail how grades will be shared by Friday 18th June and will provide an overview of the various procedures adhered to this session.

Appeals information was shared last week and should be referred to in the event that a pupil wishes to appeal. Appeal registration opens on Friday 25th June. School closes on the same day. As the process is pupil and family led rather than school led, staff will have no direct role in submitting appeals. Over summer, office staff will send a weekly reminder to ensure that pupils and families are able to register appeals.

While not confirmed, SQA are suggesting that National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses will cover the same content as that covered this session. We cannot anticipate how the courses will be assessed at this stage. SQA hope to confirm the makeup of course content by the end of term.