

Parental Update 16.6.2020

We are now in our second week of access to our own building. The pupils who were attending the Hub in Carlibar have welcomed the return to Barrhead High and we have seen an increase in the number of pupils engaging in this.

Staff have been able to access the building too and have been ensuring it is ready for other pupils to return in August, while continuing to support the current distance learning activities.

Provision for Children of Key Workers

We still offer in-school provision for the children of key workers and that can continue over the summer (organised by ERC) and into August even when the recovery timetable (see below) commences. This provision is only offered when the parent/carer (both parents/carers if more than one) is at work in a key role as defined by the Scottish Government).

I have attached a letter to this email giving information about the criteria and how to apply for this provision into next session, if you will require it and believe you meet the criteria. **The application process is open from today and ERC have asked all applicants to have submitted their form by Monday 22nd June.**

Transition Visits of P7 Pupils

On Monday and Tuesday of next week, we will welcome the P7 pupils who are joining S1 next session. Unfortunately we cannot offer our normal 2 days in classes but the pupils will visit for a 1.5 hour session in their primary classes over 5 different sessions, which will allow us to introduce them to the school and some key staff (including Mr Beaton, their Year Head, and Mrs Johnston, the new Head Teacher) while still observing the health & safety requirements.

S1 and S3 Reports

We are very conscious that we were not able to issue the full reports for S1 and S3, which were scheduled for during the school closure period. Access to the management system on which reports are written proved unreliable from home for staff. The collation and distribution would also have been a major issue when staff were not working in the school building so we took the decision not to issue them at this time. I apologise to the parents and pupils who were affected by this. We are currently looking at any necessary changes to our school calendar for next session, particularly in regard to parental contact opportunities, to compensate for this. At this point we do not know when a 'normal' parents' meeting will be able to take place so we may require alternative approaches.

Planning for next session continues to develop on a day-to-day basis and I am not yet in a position to confirm all the arrangements. However there have been some issues confirmed and I wanted to share them with you.

Changes to Calendar for 2020/21

East Renfrewshire Council have agreed some changes to the calendar for all ERC schools:

- Teachers and school staff return Monday 10th August 2020
- There will be 2 In-Service days – 10th & 11th August 2020
- Pupils will return on **Wednesday 12th August 2020**.
- As a consequence of the early return, there will be 5 additional holiday dates later in the session:
 - **Thursday 24th September 2020** – added to September Weekend
 - **Monday 21st & Tuesday 22nd December 2020** – added to the Christmas Holidays (Term 2 will now finish on Friday 18th December 2020)
 - **Monday 28th & Tuesday 29th June 2021** – added to the Summer Holidays (school will now close on Friday 25th June 2021)
- There was a previously announced date change for Inservice Day 5 – it will now take place on **Thurs 6th May 2021** instead of Tuesday 1st June 2021 as previously announced) to coincide with the local elections.

August Timetable

The creation of an amended timetable for August continues to be a major focus of our attention and work at this time and it is a major task. We are planning a timetable which will allow us to maximise in-school provision for all pupils in August. The details will be dependent on the national guidelines in place at that time, particularly around social distancing, which remain uncertain at this point.

The timetable will also ensure a limited number of pupils in classes or in the building at a time and a limited amount of social contact time thus meeting social distancing requirements and minimising any health risks.

We are aiming to be able to share the full details, including individual pupil timetables, by the end of next week. However, to keep you in the picture, the expectation at this point is:

- all pupils will attend school for either a morning or an afternoon every day
- this could be always mornings, always afternoons or a mixture for any individual
- the school day will consist of a 3-period block of 2.5 hours in the morning and the same in the afternoon (actual times to be confirmed)
- pupils will come into school by a specified door/route and proceed straight to their class, in most cases remaining in that room for the 3 periods, and then exit straight from the class out the building.
- there will be no intervals and no pupils will remain in school over lunchtime
- classes will be half-size with half the pupils being taught in the morning and the other half in the afternoon (unless the class is small enough not to require this)
- pupils in S1-4 will have one 3-period session with each of their subjects every 2 weeks (half the normal teaching time)

- pupils in S5/6 will have one 3-period session with each of their subjects every week (half their normal teaching time)
- pupils will be expected to continue to working at home when they are not in school and this work will be coordinated through the in-school contact time and other distance learning activities.
- we will continue to follow the appropriate guidelines on health & safety and would ask for your help in reinforcing that with the young people

We believe we have a model which best meets the health & safety requirements at this time but also give the best educational opportunities to all pupils. However, as indicated by the Scottish Government, this is clearly a 'recovery' plan and we, like yourselves, would not want it to continue any longer than necessary. At this point we do not know when that will be so we must prepare for the uncertainty.

As indicated above, we are aiming to be in a position to issue timetables by the end of next week, although there is still a significant amount of work to be completed before that can happen. Unfortunately, we cannot access the recovery timetable via our normal management systems, so everything is taking longer.

School Trip Refunds

The work is continuing to progress on recovering the full money for all parents, although I am aware that this is progressing much slower than you or we would have liked. We have an insurance claim lodged against all the trips as none were forthcoming with full refunds, even where the trip was cancelled by the company. East Renfrewshire Council have also been looking at the possibility of authorising refunds while claims are pending. I will let parents know as soon as we have any development on this.

I would hope to be able to give you some further updates next week before the end of the term.

Andy Sinclair,
Head Teacher
16th June 2020