



Parental Information and Update

17th January 2022

Dear Parent/ Carer

Given the uncertainties of the last month related to Covid-19, I thought that another whole school update at this time would be helpful.

Following our return to school on the 5th January, our absence numbers have been relatively low and remain so at this time. The changes made to guidelines by the First Minister during the first week of January, and in particular with regard to household contacts who remain negative, appear to have supported this lower absence rate and the ongoing continuity of education for our children, which we know is so important. Whilst we would all recognise that wider community infection rates remain changeable, we hope to continue through the weeks ahead with a similar position.

Life and learning in school has therefore continued in a very positive way. Whilst our children continue to work largely within their own class bubbles and whilst mixing across our classes indoors remains very limited at this time, our children continue to enjoy most aspects of 'normal' life in school. Apart from larger school gatherings and cross-class learning activities, we continue positively forwards with a full curriculum. Our Health & Safety routines remain critical aspect of school life. Hand-hygiene, adult social-distancing and mask wearing in appropriate areas of the school, appropriate ventilation in rooms and appropriate levels of sanitising the environment and resources all remain vital aspects of our learning together. As per national guidance, regular lateral flow testing ought also to remain part of our shared routines.

Our whole school **Scottish Literacy** theme has been enjoyed by all, including the virtual Macastory Scots Language sessions last week. On Friday, it was also wonderful to see and to hear about many of our children's choices about their Heroes, including about the ways in which they have thought closely about our own School Values as part of this. Our next school newsletter will be shared in February and there will be much more on these and other themes therein.

Our next **Parents' Evening dates are Wednesday 9th and Thursday 10th March**. We had hoped that this may have represented a time by which our parents and carers would be able to be back in the building for face-to-face meetings. Following the last six weeks however, it seems highly unlikely now that the national and authority based restrictions will permit this. We are therefore planning to use a video-call format for these meetings in March. The system is simple to manage and is accessed by parents through a link which is emailed to you, following booking appointments in the usual way. Our existing 'cloud' system has this functionality which has been very favourably evaluated by others. I hope this will feel a positive step forwards in our shared communication. With regards to having our families able to re-enter the playground/ school buildings, I have no further information on this for now however we will continue to keep you updated.



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We have had confirmation from both Lockerbie Manor and our ERC Health & Safety colleagues that we are, as we currently stand, very much **able to continue planning for our Primary 7 children's residential trip in March**. We will continue to assess what mitigations are appropriate for us to put in place, including whether or not we can plan to mix as freely with other children/ staff from our cluster primary schools who will be attending at the same time, however I am delighted that we can continue to plan for this.

Our **School Street trial continues on Academy Road**, with vehicular restrictions ongoing between 08:30-09:30, and 14:30-15:30. You may have noticed that we are again putting out traffic cones along the parking bays at these times, in order to support road safety, visibility and social-distancing, and this has worked well over the last six or so school weeks. Alongside the Parent Council, we continue to communicate with our ERC Roads Department colleagues to assess the School Street trial. Thank-you for your ongoing support in this matter.

In connection, following our School Parliament meeting in early December, we aim to develop ways to support **'Walking Buses'** for our families and this will be discussed at the **Parent Council meeting on Tuesday 18th January**. As part of our 'sustainability' actions following our School Summit in November and the School Parliament meeting, our plans for developing the ways that we can recycle and share **'pre-loved, sustainable school uniform'** (from nursery to P7) will also be discussed at the Parent Council meeting.

We understand what a challenging time this remains for our whole school community. Should you need to speak with us, please do not feel that any matter is too small, either in making contact through the school office or even asking 'across the railings' at the start or end of day with one of the Senior Leadership Team, who are always there.

Kind regards,

Rob Lawson

Head Teacher