



Education, Communities & Organisational Development

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8 March 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

The latest announcement regarding phased return to school was made by the First Minister on 2 March 2021. Depending on a checkpoint on 11 March, it is anticipated that p4-7 will return to primary schools. Secondary school return is more complex due to the mitigations which are required in order to support any further recovery ie:

- 2m social distancing in school - which has a significant impact on the number of pupils who can attend classes
- 1m social distancing on school transport – this halves the no of pupils who can travel on school buses

We have 8 secondary schools in Moray and they have very different buildings, capacities, rolls and staff availability. Headteachers are currently working with their leadership teams and staff to plan for this further recovery taking all these factors into consideration. It is not possible to have a common approach across all schools however I would ask that you note the following points which are vital in developing plans.

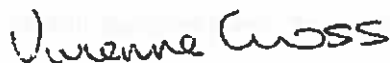
- The number of pupils who can be in school each day – each school will be able to accommodate approximately a third of their normal school roll
- There are 10 school days from 15 March to the end of term (apart from Lossiemouth High who have 8 due to already agreed additional closure days to prepare for moving to the new building)
- The focus on the senior phase to complete learning and prepare for assessment for SQA and other accredited qualifications
- There may be an imbalance across year groups due to timetabling restrictions
- This is not a full time return to school – it is anticipated that this may happen after Easter.
- Any S1-3 groups returning to school will be dependent on local decision making and context of each school. Remote learning will continue for the majority of learners
- As more staff will be in school working with small groups of pupils, they will be unable to also support remote learning however you will be signposted to the National Remote Learning offer. We await further guidance about this. Schools will continue to do what they can however will be restricted due to staff covering in-school learning.
- Face masks will require to be worn at all times in secondary schools and on all school transport.
- Expectations are that young people will remain on site for the duration of the day as an increased mitigation and to allow school staff to stagger lunches etc

There is a great deal of planning required between now and 15 March and so I ask once again for your continued support and understanding as schools shape this up and share plans with you. I would also request that any key workers who are currently making use of the childcare facility, review the need for places for the last two weeks of term as this service reduces the number of pupils who can return as of 15 March. Your support with this is greatly appreciated. If you can keep the school informed of any change in circumstances or any reduction in demand for the last two weeks, we would be very grateful.

As with everything at the moment, the information contained in this letter is only valid until further information comes forward and so there could be further changes announced by the Scottish Government. Please also note that neither myself nor the schools get advance warning of any announcements and we await technical guidance for the phased return so that plans can be finalised. It should be noted that the information in this letter is based on the information we hold at present and is subject to further change.

Finally I thank you all for your support and patience once again. Head Teachers will release their plans as and when they are able to do so in advance of 15 March. Please stay safe and well as we continue in lockdown.

Yours sincerely



Vivienne Cross
Head of Education (Chief Education Officer)