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Date: 11 August 2021



Education and Families
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Dear Parent / Carer

Return to School – Monday 16 August 2021

I hope you all have had a great holiday and, for once, I can honestly say I hope you enjoyed the Scottish summer weather.

I wanted to update you with some information on the return to school following recent Scottish Government announcements regarding the country moving to Level 0 on July 19 and the move beyond Level 0 from 9 August.

With the exception of the changes I will outline in this letter, most of the COVID19 mitigations that were in place last session will remain in place for the next six weeks. A further review will then be carried out. I will keep you informed of any further changes to this guidance as we receive them.

Monday 16 August 2021

- S1-S5 pupils return to school at 8.55am
- S6 pupils return at 9.30am
- All pupils will follow normal school timetable

Arriving in School on the First Day and Distribution of Timetables

- S1 should report to the S1 playground. They should report there every morning thereafter. They will be met by their Year Head and class teachers and escorted to class.
- S2 and S3 should report to their outside assembly areas. They should report there every morning thereafter. They will be met by their Year Head and class teachers and escorted to class.
- S4 should report to the MUGA. Thereafter they can go directly to their timetabled classes.
- S5 should report to the Games Hall at 8.55am. Thereafter they can go directly to their timetabled classes.
- S6 should report to the Games Hall **at 9.30am**. Thereafter they can go directly to their timetabled classes.
- Teachers will be at the school gates and in the playground to direct pupils to their assembly areas and to escort them to their first class.



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- We will keep a close eye on the weather forecast. If the weather is bad, we might change these arrangements so the children can assemble indoors. Teachers will direct the children to the appropriate area.

School Day

We will follow our normal school day pattern as much as possible.

- School start and finish times as per normal timetable.
- Monday – Thursday (8.55am – 3.45pm); Friday (8.55am – 12.30pm)
- We will continue with staggered interval and lunch times to minimise contact between year groups at these times and to reduce movement around the school. This will result in a longer interval and lunchtime for S1-S3 pupils (by approx. 10 minutes); S4-6 will have no change to their interval or lunchtime.
- S4-S6 will be dismissed 5 minutes early Monday – Thursday i.e. at 3.40pm

First Days Back at School

Our focus in the first few days will be to ensure all young people are back safely, are aware of the safety measures in place and how they can continue to help maintain a safe environment for everyone. Young people were extremely conscientious in this respect last session and I am sure they will demonstrate the same maturity and understanding this session.

There will be a focus on supporting our new first year pupils and making sure they feel safe and confident in their first days back.

We have prepared specific welcome back and health and wellbeing materials and activities for young people to use.

Health and Safety Risk Assessments

We have prepared an updated Cardinal Newman High School risk assessment to comply with the latest Scottish Government guidance and to address our own local COVID-19 risks. We will continue to develop any individual risk assessments as necessary. If you feel that your child requires an individual risk assessment or you would like to discuss an individual risk assessment or any aspect of our whole school risk assessment, please contact us.

There is signage across the whole school building and in the external areas to support our health and safety plans. We will be operating a keep left policy in all areas of the school.

COVID19 Symptoms

- (i) Young people who develop the symptoms of COVID19 (high temperature, new continuous cough or a loss or change to sense of smell or taste) should not come to school.
- (ii) Young people who develop the symptoms of COVID19 or who test positive using PCR tests or a Lateral Flow Device (LFD) must self-isolate immediately in line with NHS guidance. You should arrange a PCR test as soon as possible following a positive LFD result.
- (iii) Parents or young people should inform the school of any positive test results.

Young people under 18 years of age who are close contacts of a positive COVID19 case

- (iv) The previous requirement for young people under the age of 18 who are close contacts of positive cases to self-isolate for 10 days has been removed from August 9.
- (v) From August 9 young people under 18 who are identified by Test and Protect as close contacts of positive cases should:
 - (a) Self-isolate immediately;
 - (b) Book a PCR Test;
 - (c) Continue to self-isolate in line with NHS guidance until the result of the PCR test is known;
 - (d) If the PCR Test is negative and the young person has no COVID19 symptoms they can return to school – even if the positive case is a household member;
 - (e) If symptoms develop the young person must self-isolate;
 - (f) If the young person has had a positive PCR test in the previous 90 days, they do not need to do another PCR test and do not need to self-isolate, unless they develop symptoms.

Asymptomatic Testing Programme: LFD Testing

I want to remind you also about the School Asymptomatic Testing Programme, which is in place as part of the package of COVID-19 risk reduction mitigations in schools across Scotland.

We are encouraging young people and staff to participate. I am sending you a separate letter about the testing programme and a consent letter if you and your child wish to take part. Young people aged 16 or over can provide their own consent if they wish to take part in the programme.

COVID19 Vaccination Programme – 16 and 17 year olds

From Friday 6 August all young people aged 16 and 17 in Scotland are being offered the coronavirus vaccination. You should discuss this with your child. Eligible young people who wish to be vaccinated should register their interest through the online portal at NHS inform. They will then be sent an appointment via SMS or email. Anyone who does not register an interest will be sent an appointment invitation by post. It is expected that everyone in this age group will have been offered a vaccination appointment by the end of September.

Face Coverings

Face coverings should be worn at all times by staff and young people in the school building, including S1-3 pupils (not just senior phase) in classrooms, in communal areas, changing rooms and when moving about the school. Please ensure your child brings a face covering(s) with them to school each day. Young people who are exempt do not need to wear a face covering.

School Transport

Young people aged 12 and over are required to wear face coverings on school transport. Physical distancing between young people on school transport is not required, however a 1m distance should remain between the driver and young people.

Physical Distancing

Physical distancing between adults, and between adults and young people, will remain in place at 2m in Cardinal Newman High School. Young people do not need to maintain physical distance amongst themselves but we are encouraging them to avoid physical social contact as much as possible and we are using all of the space available in school to promote social distancing.

In classrooms we will maintain the physical layout we set up last session and young people will be seated according to an agreed seating plan.

As the ventilation / available space in social areas is not sufficient to meet the standards required in our Health and Safety Risk Assessment, indoor social areas will not be in use. Young people will have to go outside into the playground at interval and lunchtime. They should dress accordingly. If the weather is bad we will identify an indoor area for young people to go on that particular day. This system worked well last year and we will continue to monitor this year.

If young people purchase their lunch from the canteen they will be able to eat their lunch at the tables set up in the canteen.

Personal Hygiene

Key personal hygiene measures that we are continuing to promote in school are:

- Frequent hand washing/sanitising, particularly when entering/leaving and before/after eating and using the toilet. We have installed additional facilities and products for frequent hand washing and sanitising of chairs, desks etc. around the school and in classrooms.
- Where possible pupils should bring their own pencils, pens, rulers etc. and keep them for their own use.
- Enhanced cleaning routines will continue.

School Canteen

The school canteen will be offering a pre-ordered food service on our return to school.

The app will be available for young people to download to their phones to order their preferred choices. They will then collect their prepared order at interval and lunchtime.

New S1 pupils should have received their login details during the summer holidays. We will make sure that the children who wish to use the canteen can do so.

The canteen will be cashless as far as possible – although we will be flexible in the first days of the scheme to ensure that any child who wants to purchase food with cash can use the system.

Water will be available for purchase from the canteen at interval and lunchtime.

We have also installed COVID19 compliant water fountains in the school which young people can use to fill their water bottles free of charge. Young people should bring a water bottle to school with them if they wish to use the water fountains.

S1 pupils should remain in school at lunchtime. Parents should agree this with their children and make the appropriate arrangements.

Parents and Visitors to the school

Parents and carers are allowed onto school premises only when strictly necessary. I know you are as keen as we are to resume our normal calendar of events including parents' evenings, awards ceremonies, year group mass etc. Hopefully, I will be able to write to you after the next review in six weeks with an update to this part of the guidance which would allow us to resume normal parent / school visits and events.

Please do not enter the school premises including the staff car park. All pupils should be dropped-off at the bottom car park next to the bus bay.

Parents [and any other adult visitor] can only enter the building with a prior appointment and even then only if it is absolutely necessary. If you need to speak to us for any reason please telephone first. We can make arrangements to meet in person if necessary.

We will continue to contact you as normal if we need to.

Practical Subjects and School Uniform

I am delighted to let you know that the remaining restrictions on drama, music, PE and dance have been removed. We are now able to use PE changing rooms. Young people should bring PE kit with them to school in their bags.

From Monday 16 August all young people should come to school each day in full uniform.

School Uniform

- Blazer
- White Shirt
- School Tie (S5 and S6 have their own tie design)
- Plain black tailored trousers or skirt
(No jeans, tracksuit, jogging pants, leggings or other leg-hugging trousers)
- Plain, black V-necked jumper (optional)
- No other sweatshirts, cardigans, jumpers etc.
- No football colours at any time – including for PE lessons
- No outdoor clothing other than the blazer is allowed within the school building
- Black shoes or plain black trainers

We will be expecting that all pupils maintain the good standard of school uniform we have built up over the years with your help and support. We will do everything we can to help you maintain our agreed dress code.

We have ordered ties and will have plenty in stock when the pupils return next week. We can distribute these when pupils return if they do not have them before they come back. If we can help you with school uniform in any way let us know.

Faith Life of the School

Our school chaplain Fr. Paul Denney continued to provide spiritual support for young people and staff throughout the last 18 months. Fr. Denney encourages and supports staff and young people to live the faith and takes time to get to know our young people individually through his programme of classroom visits and masses, and the regular celebration of the sacraments in school. Clergy from our local parishes also provide excellent spiritual support and help us to celebrate the major feasts and seasons of the Church. I will be meeting with Father Denney and chaplaincy colleagues next week to agree our whole school faith life calendar for next session which will reflect current health guidance.

I know this is quite a long document but I wanted to provide you with as much information as possible at this time. If you need to contact us for whatever reason, please do not hesitate.

We are all really looking forward to having young people back with us next week. We will do everything we possibly can to make sure that our young people are safe and well looked after.

I will write to you again in the days ahead with details of our proposed whole school action plan and our main improvement priorities for next session.

With every best wish

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'R. Smith', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Robert Smith

Acting Head Teacher