

St Andrew's Academy

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Date: 11 June 2020

Dear P7 Parents/Carers and Pupils,

On behalf of our entire school community, I am delighted that you will be joining St Andrew's Academy as one of our new S1 students in August. We are all really looking forward to welcoming you to your new school. I hope that this letter finds you and your family well at this difficult time.

We hope that this is the beginning of a long, successful and happy relationship. We would like to reassure you that we will do our very best to ensure that your child settles happily in the school. We also aim to ensure that every child has a positive experience of secondary school education and he/she will be encouraged to achieve his/her full potential.

I am aware that transfer from primary to secondary is an exciting but occasionally anxious time, not just for the children but also for parents, particularly if this is the first time that a member of the family has entered secondary education. If you have any concerns or issues which you wish to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact the school using the contact details listed on our school website.

<http://www.standrewspaisley.com/contact-us.html>

P7 to S1 Transition

Transitions are very important points in both a young person and their families' lives. We were not able to conduct our P7 to S1 Transition Programme in our usual way, including the 2 day visit that should have taken place at the end of May but there has been much going on to support the S1 students who will be coming to St Andrew's in August.

We have a dedicated section of our school website where transition information has been posted over the last few weeks.

<http://www.standrewspaisley.com/the-transition-zone.html>

The primary schools have been sharing this information with their families. It includes video welcomes to the school, introductions of key staff, video tours for S1, powerpoints with relevant information for P7's, maps of the school, etc. This will continue to be developed.

Primary colleagues have shared information with our staff which has allowed us to make up the new S1 classes using friendship groupings. The primary schools will pass this information to their students very soon. It is not possible for parents to make direct requests regarding the class in which children are placed, however, we take advice from P7 staff about which groups of students will work best together. Much care is taken to ensure that all our classes are balanced in the way that they are made up.

There have been additional “virtual” meetings between primary staff and support staff in secondary for students with an additional support need or other needs that we should be considering for transition.

Some of our Primary Schools and their P7 students had already visited the school for a tour of the building. We will try and organise this, with suitable consideration given to safety and risk control, for the Primary Schools that did not have a chance to visit before lockdown. We will be contacting the primary schools to plan this. We will also invite students from non-associated primary schools as well. There will be a time slot notified to you and parents/carers should make arrangements to bring their child to St Andrew’s for the time stated. The pupils will be met by a member of staff from St Andrew’s, then brought into the building following precautions related to the spread of coronavirus. They will have a welcome talk and have a supervised tour of the building. The visit will last about 45 minutes and secondary staff will supervise the pupils returning to their parents. Unfortunately, due to the restrictions due to corona virus parents/carers will not be able to enter the school building.

We are confident that our new S1 students will settle very quickly when they join us, and all the staff are really looking forward to seeing them.

Returning to St Andrew’s in August

When students return to the school in August, it will be in a blended learning model. This will mean that students will be in class on some days and supported to learn at home on other days. Social distancing means that it is impossible to have the numbers of students in the school that we would normally have. The numbers in each classroom will be significantly smaller to enact social distancing guidance. All the secondary schools are working together to develop a model that works best to support our students and staff to learn in an effective and safe manner.

Our new S1 students will be given an induction to the school when they first attend. We will make sure that there are plenty of staff and senior students available to act as guides and to support our new S1. S1 students have an S6 Buddy assigned to them and these Buddies will check in with the students over their first few weeks to make sure they are settled in.

I will update you with further information on how this will work before the end of June to allow you as much time as possible to prepare for these new arrangements.

Uniform for August

We are planning for students to wear, as far as is possible, school uniform when we return in August. Our uniform gives a sense of school identity and community. It also helps with school security and, with a change in the model for students attending school, this is just as important as ever. We are not asking parents to make special journeys to shops at this time but as Scotland moves onto the next phases of the road map it should become easier for us to do so. At a recent meeting of the Renfrewshire Secondary Headteachers there was agreement about the wearing of school uniform. Please note that there is no expectation for students to buy blazers.

Our uniform consists of:

- Black trousers/skirts (leggings/jeans are not to be worn to school)
- Black jumper (no hoodies, or jumper with logos)
- White shirt
- Black coats/jackets
- All black shoes (no brightly coloured shoes or trainers)
- School tie (some students may be given a tie by their primary schools and we will try to have a stock available in the school come August)
- Leather or denim jackets are not part of our dress code and should not be worn.

Renfrewshire Council offers a clothing grant to assist parent/carers with the purchase of clothing and footwear for school. Applications can be submitted once a year online via the Renfrewshire Council website at

<http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/freeschoolmealsandclothinggrants>

Students who live more than 2 miles from the school (using the shortest safe walking route) can apply for school bus transport. You can apply and get more information from the council website at:

<http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/3486/Home-to-school-transport>

I know that you will have many unanswered questions at this difficult time and as we are still currently developing our plans for the opening of school in August, I may not be in a position to answer them. As soon as we have more information and guidance about the opening of schools I will share this with you.

I will provide an update before the end of term on the plans for August but in the meantime, I wish you and all your families every best regard at this time.

Take care and God Bless.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin Henry". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'K' and 'H'.

Kevin Henry
Head Teacher