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4 August 2021

Arrangements for the Return to School 18 August 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope you and your loved ones are well and you were able to enjoy the summer holidays. Following the Scottish Government's most recent announcement, I am able to detail our arrangements for the return of all young people to school on Wednesday 18 August. All staff are looking forward to welcoming your child(ren) back to school and commencing learning and teaching.

The government's guidance assumes that the current trend in the suppression of the virus and the impact of the vaccination programme will progress in the way in which it has been. Should there be any change in our plans we would let you know as soon as possible.

The government's most recent guidelines can be found at the link below. **In essence they state that the same protocols that were in place before the summer holidays should remain in place for at least 6 weeks, subject to any future amendments.**

I am pleased that we will be able to offer our full range of activities in PE, Drama and Music, following the updated guidance.

It is unfortunate that we cannot return to school with everything in place as in a 'normal' year. The guidelines unfortunately impact on our ability to meet with young people for assemblies and to meet with parents and carers too in large groups. I realise that this will have a particular impact on our new S1 cohort, but we will do our utmost to ensure those young people and their families are supported throughout their transition to Stirling high School.

Our arrangements have been made in line with the Scottish Government's guidelines:

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance on reducing the risks in schools - gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-reducing-the-risks-in-schools/pages/1-1-introduction-and-overview.aspx)

Supports for S1

We recognise that our new S1s will not be aware of our existing protocols. We will take time during the first day to explain our mitigations and to reassure our new young people: [Covid mitigations](#)

S1 young people should go straight to the assembly hall on the first day to be met by Prefects. Prefects will escort them to their form class to meet their form teacher and will escort all S1s to their classes for the first few weeks, or until they are comfortable navigating the school.

S1s will have an early lunch for the first 3 days, whilst they get used to being in high school.

There will be an opportunity during the first day for S1s to meet individually with their senior buddy who they have been emailing throughout the summer.

S1s are not allowed out of the school grounds at lunchtimes. They should therefore use the school canteen or bring a packed lunch.

The period of lockdown and remote learning has been very difficult for many of us and has brought challenges. Some of these challenges remain and the return of young people to school will not be a return to 'business as usual'. There are many changes that we will be putting in place to ensure the safety and well-being of everyone in our school community.

I know the safety of your child is your number one priority and it is our top priority too. This letter is quite lengthy, but it details the arrangements for our new session, beginning on 18 August.

Everyone at the school is focussed on providing a welcoming, nurturing environment to support your child's development. This letter contains a lot of procedures, however, we are at the heart of everything, a school that cares about your child's well-being and we will work with you to ensure your child is safe, happy and achieving.

This letter updates all previously issued information.

Thank you and all of our young people for being patient and supportive during this unparalleled situation. We have been working closely with our colleagues in Stirling Council and following advice from the Scottish Government.

Social Distancing

The government's advice is that social distancing is not required between young people in classrooms, but that we should ensure that young people are encouraged to maintain social distancing in the social areas of the school at intervals and lunchtimes, where possible. We will continue to have separate intervals and lunchtimes for young people in S1-S3 and S4 - S6.

Staff will maintain a 2m social distance from young people at all times, unless in exceptional circumstances such as administering first aid.

Social distancing between young people can be reduced when outside but physical contact should be avoided.

Personal Hygiene

Alongside having a number of safety measures in place, we will be encouraging young people to take responsibility for their health and safety. Can I ask all parents and carers to reinforce the importance of following our safety procedures with your children.

All young people from S1-S6 are required to wear face coverings at all times when inside the school (unless exempt). This includes classrooms, corridors and social areas.

For new S1 parents/carers: if your child is medically exempt from wearing a face covering, please let us know by emailing stirlinghs@stirling.gov.uk (there is no need to email if you have previously let us know that your child is exempt).

All young people in S1-S6 can volunteer to take twice weekly Covid 19 Lateral Flow Tests. If you would like your child to take part in Lateral Flow Testing and haven't yet given permission, please

complete this short [Google Form](#) to give your permission. Tests can be collected from the school hub at the following times:

- Wednesday 11 August 2pm - 3pm
- Monday 16 August 2pm - 3pm

We would ask that all young people take a Lateral Flow Test before returning to school on 18th August, preferably on the evening of 17th or the morning of 18th.

There will continue to be hand sanitiser available in every classroom, at entrances and exits to the school and in other locations. Young people must use hand sanitiser when entering and leaving the building and any room.

There will be anti-bacterial wipes for young people to wipe down their desks and chairs before use.

Young people should try to avoid crowding together, touching their peers or sharing food and drink.

Water fountains will be available to refill water bottles.

Enhanced Cleaning

We will have additional cleaning staff in the school throughout the day. They will be focussed on 'touch points' such as door handles and bannisters and will undertake a focussed programme of cleaning toilets.

Ventilation

Room doors will be wedged open to reduce touch points and increase ventilation. Room windows will be open to provide fresh air and ventilation.

Minimising contact between individuals and groups

We will be asking our young people to maintain distance where possible, particularly when socialising indoors.

We will encourage young people to go outside of the building at intervals and lunchtimes in order to get fresh air and exercise. We have created new outdoor seating and shelters to support this. Face coverings do not need to be worn outside.

We will discourage social physical contact (hand to hand greeting/hugs, etc.)

Moving around classrooms will be minimised.

Any practical resources to be used will be wiped down before and after use with anti-bacterial wipes.

A 2m distance will be kept between young people and staff, unless this is unavoidable (for example when administering first aid).

Minimising contacts (groupings)

We will continue with our timetable as before, this includes more double lessons, especially in S4, S5 and S6. This reduces the contact our senior phase pupils have with each other and with other young people.

We have introduced a 'keep left' system for moving in corridors. This has been more effective than the previous 'one way system'.

We will not be having assemblies or large gatherings of young people.

School Dates and Times

All pupils will return to school on Wednesday 18 August.

All young people will begin at 8:45 and should go straight to form class each day.

Young people should not 'hang-around' the school inside or outside, waiting for friends at the start of each day. We realise this is difficult but we ask for your cooperation with this.

Please arrange for your child not to turn up early for school. We do not want groups of young people gathering before the school day.

Interval and Lunchtime

S4, S5 and S6 will have a 15 minute interval at 10:20. They can go outside but not leave the school grounds. Pupils should return to their period 2 class at 10.35am.

S1, S2 and S3 will have their 15 minute interval from 10:35 - 10:50 each day. Again, they can go outside but not leave the school grounds.

Our canteen service will be available at intervals and lunchtimes. Young people should queue, socially distanced, for snacks and meals. Where possible, lunch cards should be topped up online via ParentPay.

Our catering facility will be following risk-assessed procedures. Catering will be available, free school meals will be available. Self-service will not be available to reduce contact. Young people will queue and ask for items rather than selecting them for themselves.

Please note our catering staff will not be accepting cash. Young people must use the machines to top up their card or parents use ParentPay.

We will return to our 2 separate lunchtimes.

S1, S2 and S3 will have lunch on a Monday and Tuesday from 12:30 until 1:15 and on a Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 11:40 until 12:25.

S4, S5 and S6 will have lunch on a Monday and Tuesday at 1:15 until 2:00 and on a Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 12:25 until 1:10.

This is to reduce contact between groups.

Young people in S2-S6 may go out of the school grounds for lunch, however they would have to adhere to social distancing in any shops and wear a mask, following any rules set by the shops. Young people should expect queues and waiting times in local shops and would need to be able to return to the school in time. Young people will have to use hand sanitiser on returning to the school building. Hot food prepared outside of the school cannot be brought into the school.

Respecting Others

Respect is one of our key school values. It is important for all of our young people to treat each other with respect and follow our Covid protocols in a mature, responsible way that ensures everyone's safety as well as their own.

Young people should continue to respect the needs of others in our community, by giving space to others on pavements and by disposing of litter responsibly when going to and from school. Our young people have an excellent reputation in the community and we are all proud of our Eco-work.

At the end of each day

All young people will leave school at 3:40 on a Monday and Tuesday and 2:50 on a Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

Young people should make their way to the nearest exit and not wait in the hub to meet friends to reduce the number of young people crowding together.

School Calendar of Events

At this time I cannot guarantee that we can offer our full range of activities and extracurricular clubs to be in place but we will strive to bring these activities back as soon as it is safe to do so.

Parents, carers and other visitors are asked not to come to the school unless this has been arranged with staff. Visitors to the school will be kept to a minimum.

You can contact the school at any time via email or phone: [Contact Us](#)

We will ensure that there are clear lines of communication between you and the school. Staff will be available every day to answer your queries.

We intend to make the school as welcoming as always through maintaining a caring and nurturing environment.

Alongside the morning break time, staff will allow pupils to go to the toilet when necessary, helping to prevent busy periods.

Uniform

We expect all young people to wear their full school uniform unless they have PE. Blue school t-shirts and suitable tracksuit bottoms/shorts should be worn on PE days. A list of our school uniform is on the school website: [School Uniform](#)

S6 Wider Achievement periods

As was the case in June, S6 young people can work from home during periods where they do not have a timetabled class. This includes wider achievement periods, Open University courses, online college courses and subjects studied online by teachers from other Stirling Council schools (such as Politics and Philosophy). We will endeavour to start wider achievement courses as soon as possible. The cafe will not open at the beginning of the new term, but training for cafe workers will begin.

School College Partnership courses

We expect that Foundation Apprenticeship and College campus skills for work courses will initially be online for most courses. Where face-to-face teaching is possible, lecturers will be in contact with

young people directly. Mr Hamilton will meet with all young people who have a school college partnership place in the first week of the new term.

First day back Wednesday 18 August

Form time will be extended to issue timetables, familiarise our young people with our protocols and to answer any questions.

Support for Young People

We understand that the return to school will be challenging for some pupils and a wide range of support will be in place for them. It is important during this return to school that your child's health and well being are supported. Our Pupil Support team will be on hand to answer any of your questions and to meet with your child should they require any additional support.

Community Partnership

Our Community Partnership (Parent Council) is available to support and advise parents and carers also. Please contact us at: shsengagement@gmail.com

Transport

Young people travelling on our Gargunnock school bus should ensure their hands are washed before boarding. Our school bus contactor will ensure there is hand sanitiser on the bus. There is no requirement for social distancing on the bus. Young people who travel by council taxi will sit in the back and may have to wear a mask if no screen between them and the driver is available.

Drop off and Pick Up at School

We would encourage our young people to walk or cycle to school if possible. Parents and carers dropping off or picking up should do so at the **rear of the school not at the front**. Please try to time your dropping off for 8:45.

Health and Safety

Risk Assessments will be in place for our young people and staff returning in August.

If your child has a health issue that you are concerned about, please contact the school to discuss as it may be appropriate to have an individualised risk assessment. If your child identifies as Black, Asian and/or Minority Ethnic please contact the school if you would like an individualised risk assessment.

To help minimise the spread of infection, young people are asked to enter the building via the main pupil entrance, use the hand sanitizer provided or wash their hands.

Reporting absence and Covid-19 symptoms

If your child is absent from school, please email stirlinghs@glow.sch.uk on the morning of the first day of absence. If the reason is possible or confirmed Covid-19 symptoms or self isolation due to contact with a confirmed case please inform the school via telephone. Form teachers will no longer accept absence notes. If your child has been absent after testing positive or having been identified as a close contact of a positive case, you should inform the school office of the date the self-isolation period is due to end.

Once again, I would like to thank you on behalf of all the staff for your understanding and patience. We look forward to welcoming our young people back to a safe learning environment on August 18th.

Our plans will be reviewed in line with government and council advice. We will of course keep you updated with information as the situation progresses.

Please contact your child's Head of House should you have any concerns or queries. We are here for you.

Best wishes to you and your family.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Cassidy', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Paul Cassidy
Head Teacher

Timings of school day

Monday/Tuesday

Time	S1-3	S4-6
8.45-8.55	Form	Form
8.55-9.45	Period 1	Period 1
9.45-10.35	Period 2	Period 2 (Break at 10.20am)
10.35-10.50	Break	Return to period 2 class
10.50-11.40	Period 3	Period 3
11.40-12.30	Period 4	Period 4
12.30-1.15	Lunch	Period 5
1.15-2.00	Period 5	Lunch
2.00-2.50	Period 6	Period 6
2.50-3.40	Period 7	Period 7

Wednesday/Thursday/Friday

Time	S1-3	S4-6
8.45-8.55	Form	Form
8.55-9.45	Period 1	Period 1
9.45-10.35	Period 2	Period 2 (break at 10.20am)
10.35-10.50	Break	Return to period 2 class
10.50-11.40	Period 3	Period 3
11.40-12.25	Lunch	Period 4
12.25-1.10	Period 4	Lunch
1.10-2.00	Period 5	Period 5
2.00-2.50	Period 6	Period 6