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June 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

### **Return to Schools in August: Huntly Cluster**

As you will be aware, planning is underway to open schools to pupils from Wednesday 12 August 2020. The return to school will look different for all pupils and will vary from school to school.

In the Huntly cluster, we have 13 schools and each one will have an individual plan according to the number of children enrolled, space available to allow for social distancing and a number of other factors, including availability of toilets etc. Each plan will be based on the current advice that is available to Head Teachers from both the Scottish Government and Aberdeenshire Council and these will be communicated to you, from your school, as soon as we possibly can. As with everything Covid related, advice is ever-changing, and plans will be adapted in accordance with any new advice to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all of our school communities.

An incredible amount of work is going into each school's plan and every possibility has been explored to maximise the number of pupils each school can accommodate in the safest way. Family groups have been taken into consideration but please note that if you have children at both secondary school and one of our primaries, it is not possible to ensure that families are accessing their schools on the same days due to timetabling of subjects at secondary school, among many other factors. Also, the plan for your school will be subject to availability of staff as there may be staff who become ill or have to self-isolate and, if this is the case, plans will be adapted.

All pupils in the Huntly cluster schools network, regardless of the school they attend will access some home-based learning every week. Work is on-going to ensure that schools can maximise the use of technology to continue to support this in the new session, this includes staff training and enabling access to applications that up until now have been unavailable to teachers largely due to security issues. The Huntly schools are working together to ensure that teachers can provide the best learning possible through technology, or other means, to support and build upon the learning which will take place on the days that pupils do attend school.

A transport survey is being conducted which needs to be taken into consideration when planning groups of children, particularly for those schools who cannot accommodate all children on the school roll. Families who decide to opt out of returning to school in August must also be considered. As soon as all of this information has been gathered, your school will share with you the group that your child is in.

Catering will be available from schools, again, each one having it's own individual way of delivery this.

We would encourage children to wear their school uniform (but not a tie) as usual on the days they attend school. However, there is clear advice which recommends the wearing of fresh, clean clothes

daily and realise that this will mean that children may not necessarily be able to wear school uniform every day. In that case they should wear smart black and white or black and black clothing.

Our current TGS plan will involve pupils grouped in two halves: one for S1/2/3 and the other for S4/5/6. There will be designated days for each half, with some additional pupils being offered opportunities to progress their SQA studies on a rota basis. Our current capacity will allow us a maximum of one-third of TGS pupils in the building at any one time. Our transport capacity is similarly reduced.

We will communicate out a more detailed plan to you at the beginning of next week.

We understand that this is a frustrating time for everyone and you will be keen to make plans for returning to work but please be assured that we are working extremely hard to get information to you as soon as it is available and we would ask for your patience and understanding at this challenging time.

I am conscious that Mr Swinney will be making a statement later today which may result in us having to adjust our current plan. We will advise you of any changes as soon as it is possible to do so.

Yours sincerely,

Phil Gaiter  
Rector  
&  
Cluster Head Teachers