



16th June 2020
(JD/KL)

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Dear Parent/Carer

I write to provide you with a few updates regarding the work of the school in response to the current circumstances.

- **Planning for school return**

Further to senior management preparation earlier in the month, staff have been returning to the school this week to prepare for the new session, though it is a session unlike any other we have prepared for in the past. All staff will have their own roles to play in ensuring that the school can function in line with public health advice. In June, these will include a range of activities from setting classrooms out to ensure physical distancing and minimising opportunities for infection spread to creating one-way systems and implementing systematic arrangements for handwashing and other hygiene measures. This is new territory for us all but staff at all levels have risen to the challenges presented by the measures we are required to put in place.

- **Patterns for attendance in August**

You will appreciate that the situation regarding planning for August is very fast-moving, with additional guidance/clarification being sent to the school almost by the hour. We have now, however, finalised plans for primary and secondary, based on national and local guidance, which we feel are both educationally sound and in line with public health guidance.

Although I fully understand parents are keen to hear the details of these plans, I regret that I cannot share them with you at present as I must first get confirmation from the local authority, who are currently reviewing them. I expect to be able to confirm the exact pattern of attendance in both primary and secondary by the end of next week. Indeed, I had hoped that I would have this information in time for the Parent Council meeting next Tuesday, but as the government has recently announced that local authority plans must now additionally be scrutinised by Her Majesty's Inspectors, the consequent timescales will mean this is unlikely to be possible.



- **School transport**

School transport will also be subject to government guidance on physical distancing so this will require a good deal of planning too. We have now also put our provisional plans to the school transport team who will need to consider the implications of these for their service. This is an important step in the planning process, as we will need confirmation that our model will work in terms of transport, before we can finalise it.

- **Uniform**

Please note that school uniform will not be compulsory in August in either primary or secondary. This should support parents in following the advice that they ought to wash children's clothes very regularly. Parents are of course free to continue sending their children to school in uniform if this is the most convenient option for them, but we would request that children do not wear ties.

- **Primary Celebration of Success/Secondary Prizegiving**

At this time of year, we would normally be looking forward to our formal events for celebrating pupil achievement but unfortunately, these cannot take place this session. We are hopeful, however, that we will be able to mark pupil achievements in some formal way in both primary and secondary early in the new term. In the meantime, we will be writing to all parents of prize-winners.

- **Pupil Engagement with Remote Learning**

May I again offer my thanks for your support with learning at home and use this opportunity to commend our young people for the resilience they have shown in adapting to the 'new normal' of schooling. Even in August, remote learning remains likely to play a part in the school's delivery of learning and teaching, so it is critical that we continue to hone our practice and offer support to parents and pupils where necessary.

Although engagement has generally been good or excellent, there has been a number of pupils in secondary for whom we have felt that engagement was below what we would wish, and we have now written to relevant parents to offer support. I know that these letters have resulted in some very positive discussions between parents and staff, as well as between parents and children. We have also written to a number of parents to commend their child on an excellent level of engagement. I would again take the opportunity to urge parents to get in touch with the school if they have concerns or questions regarding any aspect of remote learning.

- **Staff video**

It has been a funny experience being in school this month and seeing the building so eerily quiet. We are also keen as a staff to get our beautiful school back in action and we will be in school increasingly over June getting ourselves ready to greet our young people with a smile in August. For this reason, parents and pupils should be aware that staff will be unavailable to support home learning on the days that they are in school.

I know that pupils too will be looking forward to seeing staff again in August, but in the meantime, please do point your secondary children (or P7s joining us in June) towards our secondary staff video aimed at letting our pupils know we are proud of them and missing them!

You'll find it at this link:

<https://www.breadalbane.pkc.sch.uk/breadalbane-staff-feel-good-video/>

- **P7 Transition**

I am also sharing this letter with parents of P7 pupils across our catchment due to join secondary in August as I know my updates here will also be of interest to you. I am delighted with the engagement P7 pupils have been having with our online induction materials and I look forward to seeing all our new S1 in August. In addition to the online activities, we also aim to have some induction activities for the new S1 during our first week back.

- **Parent Council Meeting**

You should already have heard that there will be a virtual parent council meeting on Zoom at 6pm on Tuesday 23rd June. I would hope to be in a position to answer most questions about August return by then so please do join us if you would like to be part of this discussion. If you can't make it, I know the Parent Council have asked for parents to provide written questions for school management, so please do get in touch with them if you have any queries you would like raised.

Mrs Marshall, Primary Depute Headteacher, will also be writing separately to parents of nursery and primary with further information.

Yours faithfully



John Devine
Headteacher

