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29 June 2020

Dear Pupil/Parent/Carer,

Reopening School Update

You will be aware that last Tuesday the Deputy First Minister made a statement in the Scottish Parliament about the ambition that all children and young people should return to school full-time in August if it is safe to do so. He has also indicated that this will be conditional and based on scientific and health advice. He has confirmed that the plans we were putting in place for blended learning should be finalised as they are essential preparation because of the possibility that they will be needed at some point in the coming months. I have repeatedly stated that the safety of our young people, their families and all our staff has been my top priority in all our preparations for return to school. This will remain the case regardless of the model we move forward with in August.

Final confirmation about this 100% return to school will only be given in the later stages of the summer holidays. As you would expect from leaders in your child's school, whilst we continue to work on the assumption that staff will return to school on the 11th August 2020 and pupils will return from the 12th August 2020, we are working to ensure that we have all possible options under control. I have communicated with you via video presentations and the new section on the school website around the plans we had when we believed that we would be operating with 2 metre social distancing and I also indicated that our plans would easily allow us to double the number of pupils in school should the social distancing rule be relaxed to 1 metre. I would now like to share the details of each of the possible scenarios with you.

1) All pupils return to school in August

KNOWN:

- This model is based on the requirement for no social distancing and pupils will follow their complete timetable every day, with the school operating normally.
- For so long as we are advised to support enhanced hand-washing we will make hand-sanitiser available in every room. We await Scottish Government advice about this.
- Pupil timetables are ready and will be distributed on the first day pupils are in school. Details of which room register classes are in will be shared in PSE Google classrooms.
- The advice on the website about designated social areas and about a new one-way system will not come into effect if this is the model we go to in August.
- Tuesday 11th August is an in-service day. Thereafter we are going to have a staggered return to school over the rest of the week as outlined below school to help our young people reacclimatise to school life.
- Wednesday 12th August the school will open to new S1 and S6 pupils only. I know that this will be disappointing to many S2-5 pupils and ALL S2-5 parents but I hope you can appreciate the need to get our new arrivals in, explain our systems and rules, show them how they can access support (and food) and provide some reassurance since their three day transition visit which always happens in June did not happen. I am confident that the S6, as well as reacquainting themselves with the school will help support our new arrivals. On this day the new S1 pupils should meet the Guidance Team outside of the front of the school at 8.40am and to assemble in front of their House sign. They will have 3 periods whereby they will work with their registration teacher and the Guidance team to familiarise them with the school and timetable etc. and they will spend blocks 4-7 in their timetabled lessons. Buddies will escort them from class to class.
- On Thursday 13th August, we will have S1, S3 and S5 pupils in school.
- On Friday 14th August we will have S2 and S4 pupils only in school.
- On Monday 17th August, all pupils return to full-time school.
- Parents want to know how they can purchase uniform and collect already purchased ties. School ties will be available for sale from the school from 9am – 2pm on Monday 10th and Tuesday 11th August. Tables will be set out to the right of the front door and we ask that parents/carers bring the correct money to reduce the need for staff to be handling cash. Ties for pupils in S1-4 are £5 and ties for senior pupils in S5-6 are £7. Parents/carers are asked to queue up in accordance to any social distancing rules that are in place at the time. If the weather is inclement, the tables will be set up in the sports hall, with direct access via the doors closest to the carpark. A one-way system will be in place if social distancing rules require it.

- In a bid to ensure that we support sustainability there will be a number of second hand ties available for a donation to our Oxfam collecting tin. There is a limited stock of other uniform held at the school, but it is advisable to order from <http://www.highland-embroidery.com/>

UNKNOWN:

- Oversight of cleaning protocols rests with a different part of the Council and I have asked for a clear statement from them about what the level of cleaning and resources will be. As soon as I receive this I will share it with parents.
- It is currently unclear whether buses will be able to run at 100%. The survey that parents of pupils entitled to public transport have been asked to complete <https://cullodenacademy.com/general-information/transport-to-school/> will be helpful in confirming arrangements. Details will be shared by Highland Council and by the school as these become available over the holidays.
- Tied in with the expectations of cleaning I do not currently know whether after-school activities will be resuming. This will be confirmed in the first week of term.

2) **There is a partial re-opening of school based on the 2m social distancing rule**

KNOWN:

- Normal classrooms in Culloden can accommodate up to 9, while practical subject classrooms can accommodate between 5 and 7 if we are enforcing 2 metre social distancing. Given that most of our classes are 30 or 20 in number this means we can have 25% of pupils under these restrictions.
- As a result, we have had to divide our pupils into 4 groups to support this. We have created these aligning sibling groupings and considering the impact of these social distancing pressures on school transport. Each group will therefore have one day in school each week Monday to Thursday and we intend to rotate the use of Fridays to maximise pupil contact. The days pupils will be in school will change each week where for example Group 1 will come on Monday and Friday week 1, Tuesday week 2, Wednesday week 3 and Thursday week 4. Details of which day each group will attend will always be published on the school website.
- A unique Year Group Google Classroom has been set up for each year group- access will be given this week- and in that Classroom, pupils will find details of the groupings that they are in. Given the work that has gone into creating these, no swaps will be considered at this time.
- On the school website <https://cullodenacademy.com/>, in the section entitled Plans for August 2020, you will find more information about how this rotation works and why it is necessary.

- In that same section of the website you will find details of processes that we have put in place to allow pupils to access school safely and move around the building to engage with their teachers. This includes information on a new one-way system, designated social areas, amendments to catering and how we will enforce safe maximum numbers in every room.
- Finally, the same section of the website details resources that we have purchased to support hand hygiene and how this will be managed.
- With regards to attendance and absence, our normal communication processes will remain in place for all, so if your child(ren) is scheduled to be in school and cannot attend for any reason, please contact the school office at your earliest convenience. If your child(ren) does not arrive at school any day they are scheduled to be in and we have not had contact from you explaining this, we will send you an SMS advising you that they have not arrived as soon as we can that morning.
- Under this model, on 12th and 13th August S1 only will attend in groups- which groups are in on the 12th and which on the 13th will be confirmed in their classroom.
- On the 14th S2 alone will attend to help them transition to the new environment.
- S3-6 will therefore continue with online learning until Monday 17th when they will, in rotation, start to attend school.

UNKNOWN

- The ability of buses to transport the right number of pupils has not yet been confirmed. We have tried to factor this in to the composition of the groups but have not been able to absolutely confirm it. As mentioned above, the survey shared with parents will be very helpful in finalising this.

3) There is a partial re-opening of the school with 1m social distancing,

KNOWN:

1. Normal classrooms in Culloden can accommodate a 1:15 teacher to pupil ratio, while practical subject classrooms can accommodate a 1:10 teacher to pupil ratio with 1 metre social distancing. Given that most of our classes are 30 or 20 in number this means we can have 50%.
2. Every day we will bring two of the 4 pupil groups into school with the other two proceeding with their online learning. This means that one week your child will attend school Monday, Wednesday and Friday and the next week Tuesday and Thursday.
3. All other advice issued in the section on 2 metre social distancing is valid here.

4) Lockdown arrangements restored. As per March- June.

I believe that this is by far the least likely outcome but if there is a significant increase in Covid-19 cases and a short-term lockdown is re-imposed we will continue the online delivery of lessons as per the last three months.

NEXT STEPS:

After Thursday the school will be closed and since we will be waiting until early August for confirmation of the nature of the return to school I do not propose to communicate again after Thursday until Monday 3rd August- the day before SQA results day. Over the course of that week we will update parents and confirm arrangements for the school re-opening the following week. Later this week I will issue a letter explaining the Highland Council processes around this year's SQA Appeals system.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our pupils, parents/carers and school staff for your hard work and collaboration throughout the period of lockdown. The Chromebook rollout last year has allowed us to provide a level of engagement and learning far in excess of many parts of the country and I thank you one and all for your role in making it a success.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Vance'.

Dr J Vance
Rector