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Friday 7th August 2020

Dear Parent / Carer,

Arrangement for returning to school – August 2020

Following on from my initial update to you all last Sunday, as promised, please find a more detailed plan for our return to school. I attached the Government's guide on schools' reopening next week and this clearly showed the complexity of what we hope to achieve. The following plans are based on this Government guide and supplemented with local guidance from Argyll and Bute Council and then again from national Head Teacher discussions and from staff, pupils and parents replies to questionnaires or comments to us directly.

Consequently this letter is quite long. As in previous letters I shall sub-divide it so you can scan to the sections you feel most relevant although I would encourage you to read it all. A summary video will also follow for those who prefer that method of communication.

Dates for our return

All staff will return to school on Tuesday 11th August 2020 for an In-Service day.

Wednesday 12th August – All S1 pupils, Senior Pupil Leadership Team and those requiring extended transition all return to school.

Specific S1 information

All our new S1 pupils should come to school in Oban High School uniform **no earlier than 8:45am** on Wednesday 12th August. They should report to the main entrance of the school where there will be four, clearly marked queues by clan. Each pupil should join their clan line and use the hand sanitiser at the entrance to the school. They will then be guided to a gym hall where they will be met by their Guidance Teacher and My Time teacher. Pupils will then be guided to their classroom where they will have a virtual assembly and an extended registration to cover key aspects of orientation in school. This will include outlining the school day, issuing timetables, health and safety measures, and a range of activities with other key members of staff. Thursday 13th and Friday 14th all S1 pupils will follow their timetable as normal. Lunches can be ordered at the start of each day or the pupil can bring a packed lunch. Please see the catering section below for further details.

New S1 pupils will all be provided, free of charge with a new school tie, Clan t-shirt, kit bag and pencil, rubber and ruler.

Those S2-S6 pupils requiring extended transition

All pupils identified as vulnerable; pupils who require an extended transition back to school and pupils who attend our Learning Centre and have specific additional support needs will also all attend between Wednesday 12th and Friday 15th August. These individuals will be contacted by their Guidance Teacher.

Thursday 13th August

S5 and S6 pupils who wish to discuss their options and re-course. Please contact your Guidance Teacher in the first instance.

New enrolments into S2-S6 will be contacted by Mr Champion or a Guidance Teacher and the pupil will be invited to attend school to complete their enrolment, discuss options and any other issues. Unfortunately, parents/carers cannot enter the school building but we can have telephone conversations when necessary.

We have been supporting a number of pupils throughout the lockdown and their Family Liaison Officer will have made contact to see whether the young person would like to visit school by appointment to receive additional support.

I think it important that we give **all** pupils the opportunity to attend school in the first week should they wish. Therefore, should any S5 or S6 pupils wish to take up our offer to attend school for a familiarisation of the school building and to receive support from their DHT and Clan Guidance Teacher on Thursday 13th August; or any pupil in S2, S3 or S4 who requires such support on Friday 14th August, I would be grateful if you would contact your Guidance Teacher by Tuesday 11th August should you wish to attend and this will allow us to plan to support the number of pupils wishing such support. Please also indicate if you require a school lunch.

I am aware that not all pupils can attend during the first week or that not all will wish to attend a part week, or wish to take up the opportunity for such support. Therefore, everything shared with those who opt for the additional support will be delivered to every pupil once again on **Monday the 17th when all pupils must start back together.**

I would reassure everyone that every single pupil will receive a welcome back from myself; a health and safety talk; guidance on new routines necessary to keep us all safe; we will re-issue new school timetables for everyone; there will be an opportunity to meet with the Clan Pastoral teams; time with their My Time Teacher and opportunity to re-engage with their fellow My Time class peers. Then the new timetables will begin.

Understanding the risk

The novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, which causes the disease COVID-19, is spread by two principal routes.

1. Close contact with a person shedding virus particles leading to droplet inhalation, or
2. Touching surfaces contaminated with virus particles and subsequently transferring those viruses to the eyes, nose or mouth.

A close contact can be defined as someone living in the same household, someone who had direct or physical contact with an infected person, or someone who has remained within two metres of the infected person for longer than 15 minutes. People who have simply passed an infected person in the school corridors, street or in an enclosed place are at very low risk.

How will we control the risk?

- a) A thorough approach to cleaning will be implemented to prevent the spread of the virus, sanitation measures focusing on enhanced cleaning routines for “touch points” means that there is less opportunity for virus particles to spread from hand to hand.
- b) Hand gel and wipes have been placed at the front door, in every classroom, and across a number of wider areas across the school.
- c) Measures are in place to allow pupils and staff time to clean their hands with soap, running water or sanitiser, when they arrive at school, return from breaks, changing rooms/areas and before and after eating.
- d) Good respiratory hygiene must be practiced. Children, young people and staff will be encouraged to catch coughs/sneezes with tissues or elbow, avoid touching their faces and use bins that are emptied regularly for tissue waste.
- e) Windows and doors will be kept open to aid ventilation wherever practical. This will also help to reduce contact with door handles.
- f) Children are not required to wear masks in school unless consistently facing each other for more than 15 minutes. For example, masks will be necessary in Food Technology classes because the ovens face each other. (Pupils may wear masks at any time should they wish.)

Pupils should not come to school if they feel unwell. The main symptoms of coronavirus (Covid-19) are a high temperature, a new continuous cough and a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste.

The School’s Risk Assessment can be found on the school website. This is a working document and will continue to change in light of Scottish Government, Local Authority or school changes.

Test and Protect

This scheme will be operational from Day 1 of schools re-opening. It is operated by Public Health Scotland (PHS), not the school, and will activate wherever a case is reported. Two recorded instances of infection within a school would be classed as an outbreak and lead to the involvement of a multi-agency incident management team. This, in turn, may lead to local school closures, although that would be a decision for the incident team rather than school management.

We will have an identified room or area which is designated for anyone showing symptoms until they can be picked up. We will have PPE available for pupils and staff.

The use of PPE

PPE will not normally be required or necessary, however, there are already set risk assessment processes for where the need for PPE has been identified such as personal care, where staff come into contact with blood and body fluids or lift children and young people. In these cases PPE will be provided by the school.

The position on face coverings in schools is:

- Face coverings should not be required for most children (other than those clinically advised to wear one)
- Where adults cannot keep 2 metre distance and are interacting face-to-face for a sustained period (15 mins or more), face coverings should be worn
- Anyone (whether child, young person or adult) wishing to wear a face covering in school will be allowed to do so
- The impact of wearing a face covering for learners with additional support needs including any level of hearing loss, or for learners who are acquiring English and rely on visual cues, will be carefully considered and in these cases visors will be used as a shield, rather than face mask

There is no routine need for PPE (masks, gloves and aprons) although a supply should be available in case anyone becomes unwell. Wearing aprons and gloves is not advised, practicing good hand hygiene is the recommended way to protect against infection. It is also advisable that long hair is tied up.

Uniform and equipment

All pupils should attend school as normal in school uniform. There is no need to wash any item of clothing, including school uniform, more than you would normally.

If pupils have PE, then they should bring a change of clothing and ideally a towel. There will be no indoor PE. All PE activities are to be held outside. This increases the risk of pupils getting wet and needing to dry off and change their clothes.

We will not use the more enclosed PE changing rooms. Instead the Gym Halls, which are not be used for PE, will be used as changing areas. This allows for more appropriate social distancing during changing times.

PE is crucial to our health and well-being and must continue to be provided. However, PE activities have been modified in line with Scottish Government guidance.

Pupils are permitted to bring their own bags and equipment. These bags should be kept under their own seats when in class and should not be passed to anyone else. Similarly, anything in the bags should only be handled by the owner. Any food boxes or water bottles within the bags should be cleaned at home, every night. Nothing should be shared.

All pupils should bring a face covering to school each day. They may need this for travelling; for leaving school and going out into the community before returning to school; for taking part in Home Economics for example.

We will provide face coverings if required for activities in school where necessary.

Entering the school premises

There will be handwashing/sanitising carried out by anyone who enters the school building. Everyone enters via the front doors. When pupils use the PE side door, they too should use sanitiser when leaving and arriving.

Unless there is an emergency and a pupil needs collected by a parent or carer, parents/carers are not permitted into the school grounds.

When entering the building, pupils will go straight to their class. Pupils and staff are not permitted to gather in groups out-with their bubbles. Pupils and staff must use the gel at each door every time they enter and leave.

Timetabling

New timetables will be issued to S1s on Wednesday 12th to those requiring an extended transition on Thursday 13th and to all other pupils on Monday 17th

Our new timetable has been written with the aim of minimising pupil movement around the building and keeping our pupils in “bubbles” whilst at the same time ensuring they are receiving the best possible educational experience.

Our school day now has two sessions, one before lunch and one after lunch. Within each session pupils will be taught in Blocks and there are four Blocks each day. Breaks between Blocks will take place in classrooms and there is a staggered lunch structure with S3, S5 and S6 pupils going for lunch first at 11.50 a.m. and S1, S2 and S4 on a second lunch starting at 1.10 p.m. Both lunch lasts 45 minutes.

For S3, S4, S5 and S6 pupils this means that they will attend two subjects per day and S1 and S2 will be taught four subjects per day. Wherever possible, teachers will move to classrooms and teach their subject; rather than move the pupils unnecessarily. Pupils will need to move to specialist classrooms (for example, Science or Home Economics) as necessitated by the timetable. Please see the attached New Timetable paper for detailed information.

As well as reducing the risk of spreading Covid through limiting movement we also gain teaching time in this model. This has been possible by removing multiple period changeovers. Each changeover traditionally takes teaching time out of the day. There are normally 7 changeovers in a day, each taking a minimum of 5 minutes (often more) leading to a potential loss of 35 minutes each day. With only 2, or at the most 3 changeovers, we only lose 15 minutes teaching time with the new sessions.

There will be no school bells. Staff will be assigned duties that allow year groups to move at appropriate times to avoid bubbles mixing.

Breaks and Lunches

Pupils will receive breaks as noted in the timetable. However, these breaks will be received in classrooms. We cannot allow over 1000 pupils to break out of classes at the same time, significantly leading to the mixing of the “bubbles” unnecessarily. Pupils are allowed out to the toilet at any time during class, therefore, there is no need for them all to go to the toilet in the normal 15 minute window. Pupils will all still have down-time away from their studies. The two

changes to the norm are that they cannot leave their classes to mix with others until lunchtime and that they will need to bring their snack to school.

Lunch

Catering staff will be providing the opportunity for pupils to purchase lunch only. Pupils wishing to buy lunch will complete an order form at the beginning of each school day during their Block 1 class. Pupils will then collect their lunch from their designated lunch area and eat lunch there. All pupils are taught in Year Groups, although S5/6 are taught together. We will keep this same separation at lunch within the school to ensure the bubbles and therefore the risk of spreading Covid is reduced.

Designated lunch areas:

- S1 - Atrium and Terrace (Second Lunch)
- S2 - Games Hall (Second Lunch)
- S3 - Games Hall (First Lunch)
- S4 - Gym Hall (Second Lunch)
- S5/6 - Atrium and Terrace (First Lunch)

With the exception of S1, pupils are allowed to go out for lunch as long as they are observing social-distancing guidelines and wearing face coverings when entering shops etc. We would urge pupils to stay in their year group bubbles and not mix with pupils from any other year group when out of school.

Any food that is purchased outside of school during lunch **must not** be brought back into the building.

Any food containers or water bottles must be washed at home each evening.
Pupils must not share any food, containers, bottles... anything really!!
Pupils must remain in the year group bubbles when in the school grounds.

Cashless Catering Payments - All payments to pupil accounts should be made online via the Argyll and Bute Pay It facility.

The link is: <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/pay-it>

Full instructions and a reminder of your child's 10 digit account reference number will be issued on Monday 17th August with the normal annual data check information. S1 parents will have received a letter with this information. Please ensure you keep the reference number to hand as you need it every time you make a payment.

Cash payments can no longer be loaded by pupils on our re-valuing machines due to Covid-19 restrictions. In an emergency, or if you are unable to complete an online payment, then please send the money in an envelope clearly marked with your child's name, class and the amount of money in the envelope. This should be handed in to the school office and they will pass this to catering staff who will then add the value to the pupil's account.

Communication

Parents are not permitted in school unless to collect a child following an emergency; or following agreement by management necessitated by there being no other option.

We have gained a great deal of experience using online communication since the Lockdown began in March. This method of communication will continue.

Initial contact should ideally be through email, rather than telephone or in person.

Unless it is urgent, please email us your question or provide any information required by email. If you need to speak to someone, please request a call back via email. Remember, our teachers are teaching classes and can't reply to calls until the end of the day; in most cases anyway.

All important letters and documents are emailed to parents/carers. We follow these up with copies on the School App for Parents, which we also share news items with parents.

There are only two paper-based returns that we need from parents each year: the annual data check and the media consent form. These will be issued to all pupils on Monday 17th August and should be returned to school completed and signed by Friday 28th August at the very latest. Everything else, should wherever possible, be done by email.

Any discussions about pupils will be held over the phone or using Google Meet where appropriate.

School meetings involving a number of parties will be held using Google Meet and not in person. Parents/carers will be given all support necessary to ensure our communication with you serves the needs of our children and families.

Health and Well-Being

We realise that returning to school may be concerning for some parents/carers and pupils. Everyone is making transitions to new circumstances and we need to take time to adjust to our new situations. Many young people will cope with these transitions with minimal support, whilst others will find this more challenging and we will provide support and nurture for these pupils. We will need to be flexible and responsive to individual needs. Staff, pupils and families will need time to meet, share and reconnect. Establishing a key adult, maintaining routines and the use of familiar environments, experiences and transitional experiences will help to support this. Our focus for all pupils will be on a positive, supportive and welcoming return and getting all pupils back and supporting them in meaningful and productive learning. We have some suggestions as to how you can support your son/daughter over the next few weeks:

- Even if you are feeling anxious, modelling calmness and focussing on the positives of a return to school will be important. What did they enjoy about school and what have they missed?
- Use language that emphasises the opportunities for growth, recovery and getting back to normal.
- You may not be able to fix things or have the answers. Listening to your child and acknowledging their feelings and worries is very important. Resilience develops by working through difficult situations and by learning skills that help us cope.
- You can reassure your child by reminding them that many of us are feeling a little nervous and that difficult feelings and worries are normal, but can make us feel uncomfortable.
- Reassure them that any problems can be solved. The first step is always the hardest but you and our pastoral teams are there to listen and encourage them in a calm and supportive manner.

If you have had any difficulties or a change in circumstances during the last five months and you think it would be beneficial to your child for us to know, please contact their Guidance teacher by phone or email.

Travel to and from school

Pupils are to be encouraged to walk or cycle to school wherever possible.

If parents/carers do have to drive their children to school, they should be dropped off at a safe place and a safe distance from school. This will allow the pupils to spread out as they approach the school and avoid gatherings.

Parents/carers are not permitted to drop off children in the car park unless there is a medical need and agreement with the school is made prior to arrival.

Parents/carers are advised not to car share.

BUSES/CARS/TAXIS

- Follow the guidance on display at main bus stops.
- Drivers, pupil escorts and all passengers, including school pupils, **are required to wear suitable face coverings**. Exemptions include children under five years of age and people who have a health condition or disability. Individual discretion should be applied in considering the use of face coverings for children with breathing difficulties and disabled children who would struggle to wear a face covering. A small number of disposable masks will be available on vehicles for pupils who have forgotten to bring their own
- Mounted hand sanitisers will be provided and should be applied by all staff and pupils when entering the vehicle
- Vehicles should be kept well ventilated
- An enhanced cleaning schedule will be put in place to ensure that frequent contact points, eg door handles, are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected after each journey
- If someone displays the symptoms of Covid-19, lives with someone displaying symptoms of Covid-19 or is a confirmed case, the affected transport will be subject to an enhanced clean
- The Scottish Government has advised that dedicated school transport services should be regarded as an extension of the school estate. This means physical distancing between pupils is not necessary as long as infection rates remain low in Scotland. Due to the confined space within school transport vehicles, drivers and pupil escorts will be required to wear face masks and shields they have provided with. **All children and young people will be responsible for providing their own face coverings**
- All pupils should maintain a one metre social distance from all fare paying passengers on public bus services
- School pupils will be discouraged from singing and shouting whilst on board vehicles to reduce the possible spread of virus transmission.
- Appropriate signage will be on display in each vehicle
- Wipes and disposable face masks will should be placed in bins or waste bags as soon as possible after use

RAIL SERVICES

- All passengers, including school pupils, have to wear face coverings unless they are exempt

- ScotRail will not be providing hand sanitiser, so pupils should bring their own sanitiser with them and clean their hands before entering the carriage.
- Pupils should maintain a one metre social distance from other passengers where possible.
- Be patient – most seats need to be empty

Scotrail have kindly created two pupil only train services for Oban High School pupils: the 7.51 am from Dalnally to Oban; and the 16.11 from Oban to Dalnally

FERRIES

- Pupils must wear a face covering when travelling with Cal Mac and when using their port offices - unless they are exempt from wearing one.
- Hands should be washed thoroughly with soap and water before boarding, and hand sanitiser should be used during and after every journey. Pupils must comply with any signage or instructions on public transport, or from transport staff, as the safety measures in place are for everyone's benefit.
- Whenever possible, keep yourself and others safe by maintaining the latest physical distance guidelines at the port and on the ferry
- Where it is impossible to maintain physical distancing, avoid physical contact and face away from others, and keep the time you spend within two metres of others as short as possible
- If you are travelling in a car, some journeys will require you to remain inside the car during the crossing
- Be considerate of the impact of restrictions on the needs of fellow passengers who may have impairments, disabilities or mobility issues
- If any problems arise, or you feel ill during your journey, speak to a member of staff. In the case of an emergency, contact a member of the staff. Maintain physical distancing from staff where possible.

PLANES

- *Entry to terminal*
Sanitise hands at entry point and prepare for a forehead temperature check
Ensure face coverings are worn and gloves if possible (disposable ones are available)
Report to reception to book in and follow further instruction
- *Waiting for flight*
Position your bags on the scale for a weight check and declaration displayed, or briefed by reception
Take a seat providing as much distance between you and other passengers as possible.
The purchase of snacks and use of toilet facilities will be limited to one at a time
- *Boarding the flight*
Listen to the brief given by the pilot and, when authorised, leave the terminal building towards the aircraft
Deposit luggage as directed and take the allocated seat whilst keeping on your face covering.
Continue to wear protective items throughout the flight
- *Disembarkation*
Follow instructions from the pilot and collect luggage one at a time

Put used face coverings/gloves in a clinical waste bag
The pilot/operator will clean and disinfect the aircraft ready for the next flight.

We very much look forward to welcoming all of our pupils back to school in the coming days. If you require any further support please contact your child's Guidance teacher. Key contacts can be found on the following link:

<http://www.obanhigh.argyll-bute.sch.uk/contact>

More detailed information on our school return can be found on the school website.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P A Bain', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

P A Bain
Executive Head Teacher
Oban High School, Tiree High School & Tiree Primary School