Johnstone High School 

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17th February 2021

Dear Parent/Carer of S4-6 pupil(s),

**PHASED RETURN OF S4-6 LEARNERS TO COMPLETE PRACTICAL WORK**

I am writing in response to the First Minister’s announcements on the 2nd and 16th February that from Monday 22nd February 2021 secondary schools can start to bring back small numbers of senior pupils to complete practical work.

In this letter I will outline the arrangements for Johnstone High School S4-6 pupils who are studying practical subjects.

**The rationale / guidance that is underpinning our approach**

From Monday 22nd February we will be bringing back small groups of S4-6 pupils “*for the purpose of completing the learning and teaching of critical practical work in relation to qualifications in 2021 that can only be carried out in school”.* This quote wastaken from recently published Education Scotland guidance that schools must comply with when organising for seniors to return.

1. **Numbers allowed in the building**

We are only allowed between 5-8% of the school roll back on any given day, and it must be for essential practical work that cannot be undertaken at home. For us, this means a maximum of around 75 young people in the building.

Another important point is that we are expected to observe 2m social distancing and this has a significant impact on timetabling. Most practical subjects have a maximum class size of 20, however, with social distancing we cannot accommodate 20 pupils in a room. This means we need to split the class over more rooms and bring in more teachers. This proved most challenging when we were timetabling the return of pupils within those practical subjects with largest numbers. For example, you will see that in Art we have had to split year groups into two (based on their house group) as we have forty slots available based on four Art rooms and four Art teachers, with 10 pupils in each room.

In order to draw up the most efficient timetable, DHT Mr Menzies and I met with all of the Principal Teachers of the practical subjects to determine the requirements of each practical subject across the levels (N4 – Adv Higher). From this, Mr Menzies has created a timetable for S4-6 that reflects the needs of each subject.

1. **Subjects that are impacted**

The practical subjects that are under consideration for the return of seniors to complete practical tasks are:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Art | Photography | Modern Languages (speaking) |
| Practical metalwork | Practical woodwork | Design + Manufacture |
| Graphics | Practical cake craft | Practical cookery |
| Early Education and Childcare | Music Technology | Music |
| PE\* (awaiting lifting of tier 4 restrictions) | SFA Refereeing | Sport and Recreation |
| Admin + IT | Computing Science | Cyber Security\* (awaiting software) |

Subjects marked with a \* will not be coming back on 22nd February, but will, as soon as circumstances permit.

**How the timetable to return pupils for practical will work**

1. **The timetable (included with this letter)**

Please find attached the timetable for the return of S4-6 for practical subjects. Please refer to this for information as to when your S4-6 child should return to school from the 22nd February onwards. Please note the following points:

* You will see that it goes over a two-week cycle and we have planned until the end of this term (Easter). The Scottish government has stated that it will review the position again mid-March.
* We have drawn up morning and afternoon blocks of two and a half hours in duration. All subjects are coming in for one block, per year group, over the two-week cycle. The only exceptions to this are S5/6 Art and S5/6 Photography which will be coming in for full days at the request of the Art dept team.
* The timetable has two rows – week one and week two. Within each row there is a timetable for S5/6 and a separate one for S4. It does not matter what level your child is studying at (N4/N5/H/AdvH), they should report for school on the days and times determined by their year group, **but only if they are studying that practical subject.**

**If your S4-6 child does not study the timetabled practical subject, then they should NOT be sent to school and should continue with their remote learning from home.**

* Under each subject area ‘block’ if it is blank this means that ALL pupils should attend. E.g. S5/6 Monday morning week one - Computing - this means all S5/6 pupils who take Computing should attend that at that time.
* If underneath the block it lists particular house groups – this means that ONLY pupils in those house groups should attend at this time. This is because we are restricted by the numbers we are allowed in and due to social distancing we have limited numbers of classrooms and teachers available. An example of this would be week two, S4, Friday – Early Education and Childcare – Arran and Mull pupils come in for the morning block, and Iona and Skye pupils come in for the afternoon block.
* If underneath the block it states ‘by invitation’ – this is because the PT will be in touch with individual learners and will bring them in either in small groups or for one-to-one sessions. You may recall we asked PTs what they needed in their subject areas, and this is the approach that some of them said would work best in their department. For example, week one, S5/6 Music is on Wednesday afternoon and is ‘by invitation’. The Music dept team will be in touch with families directly when they are ready to bring in individuals and small groups.
* Morning sessions start at 9am and finish at 11.30am. Pupils will be expected to leave the building at this point.
* Afternoon sessions start at 1pm and finish at 3.30pm on Monday/ Tuesday/ Thursdays. On the short days of Wednesday/ Friday, the afternoon sessions start at 12.20pm and finish at 2.50pm.
* You may note that some blocks are empty at the moment in the timetable. This is because we hope to bring in PE and Cyber Security when we are able. PE is a well subscribed course and is likely to be spread over a number of blocks.

1. **Safety expectations**

Prior to this second lockdown and school closure, we had very robust Covid mitigation measures in school and the vast majority of our pupils complied with these. As I mentioned in many communications to parents over the past few months, we have much to be proud of as our young people continue to impress us with their responsibility and maturity.

During this phased return of learners for practical work, we will continue to have high expectations of them in relation to their conduct and compliance with our health and safety measures. Please take the time to discuss these with your child and reinforce the importance of following these measures to keep our school and your home as safe as possible.

* Pupils will be expected to wear their school uniform. This will help us to keep our building safe and secure.
* Pupils will be expected to maintain 2m distancing at all times, including the school bus if they take home to school transport
* Mask wearing and hand sanitisation will be mandatory
* Pupils will come in for their block of learning and then exit the building (to go home). There will be no interval or lunchbreak. The only exception is for S5/6 pupils who are in all day for Art or Photography. In this case, provision will be made for them in the canteen. Pupils SHOULD NOT be going to local shops as this is not a necessary journey. They should bring a packed lunch or purchase a school meal. Free school meals will of course be available.
* Pupils will be expected to follow staff instruction at all times and act in a Covid secure manner at all times. This includes our usual in-class measures such as wiping down tables.

1. **Transport**

We have spoken with the bus companies that provide home to school transport and have been informed about the maximum capacity for each bus (whilst maintaining 2m distancing). We have cross-referenced our class lists with our bus lists and we are confident that there are sufficient spaces.

Pupils who take school transport who are due in for a block of learning will be able to travel, as usual, on the school bus for one leg of their journey (either am for the morning blocks, or pm for the afternoon blocks). Regrettably, there is no provision for school bus transport in the middle of the day when some learners will be travelling home from their morning block, or coming to school for the afternoon block.

We have a stock of bus tickets available for pupils who require these. Zone 1 bus tickets can be collected from the school office. With the present restrictions there is currently no direct service from Beith Road to Kilbarchan, pupils will have to make their way to Graham Street/Kilbarchan Road to connect with the 38 service to Kilbarchan. Pupils will have to do the same for the service 904 in order to travel to Howwood.

If your child is travelling by train to Lochwinnoch they should purchase their ticket and when they come into school if they bring their ticket to the office they will be reimbursed for the cost of the train ticket. **Unfortunately, due to Renfrewshire Council audit rules, pupils/families cannot be given money in advance for train travel and cannot be reimbursed without a valid train ticket.**

1. **Entry and exit**

S4-6 pupils coming into school for morning or afternoon blocks should enter the building no more than 10 mins before their block is due to start:

8.50am for a 9am start,

12.50pm for a 1pm start on a Monday/ Tuesday/ Thursday

12.10pm for a 12.20pm start on Wednesdays/ Fridays

Pupils will be expected to enter via the canteen door and report to the assembly hall. Here they will hand sanitise and face masks will be issued (if required). Pupils will be registered, and then collected by their block teacher and taken to their classroom.

At the end of the block, pupils will sanitise again and exit by the nearest available door.

Pupils should not enter by the front foyer as this is the dedicated, separate entrance for learners who have a keyworker place in the hub. The Education Scotland guidance is very clear that hub children should be kept separate from those in for practical work, and this extends to door entry and exit.

1. **Lunches**

A limited canteen service (grab and go bagged sandwich) will be available for pupils who require a free school meal and who are in either for a morning or afternoon block. Learners who are in for a full day, either hub pupils or the Art/Photography seniors, will be able to purchase a lunch if they wish, or eat their packed lunch in the canteen. Lunch orders will be taken each morning.

1. **Impact on remote learning**

The block timetable for practical work will have an impact on the current remote learning offer in a range of ways. Firstly, when your child comes into school to access a practical session, they may miss some of their other classes. We have tried to minimise this as far as possible by scheduling blocks when subjects would have taken place in the regular timetable. However this wasn’t always achievable, and the timing of the blocks do not neatly align to period times. All of the teachers will be made aware of the block timetable, and will be mindful that sometimes their learners may not be in front of them as they are in school doing practical work. Moreover, the practical blocks are once per fortnight so hopefully the disruption will be minimal.

Secondly, when teachers of the practical subjects are in school working with S4-6, they will not be available for remote learning for their other classes at these times. This may impact on some senior classes, but is likely to impact more significantly on junior pupils in the broad general education. At the moment there is no easy solution to this. I am not able to ask teachers to teach in person and remotely at the same time, and the difficult decision does need to be taken to prioritise seniors who are undertaking SQA qualifications.

**Voluntary home testing for pupils in S4-6**

On the 2nd February the First Minister also announced that staff and seniors in school would soon have access to home testing kits.

Test kits have now arrived in school and we are now in a position to issue these to pupils in S4-6. Enclosed in this pack is a parent letter from Renfrewshire Council which includes frequently asked questions, a guide booklet, and a consent form. Home testing is entirely voluntary and confidential. Everything you need to know is contained in the guide and parent letter.

Please note that we have been asked **ONLY TO ISSUE TEST KITS TO PUPILS WHO ARE COMING INTO THE BUILDING.**

Therefore if this is something that your S4-6 child would like to take part in, please complete the consent form and when your child comes into school for a practical block lesson, they will be able to hand in the consent and collect their test kits at this point. Please do not make a journey into school specially to collect a kit; pupils should simply collect theirs the first time they come in for practical.

If your S4-6 child is not coming in for practical block lessons, please retain the consent form and when they do eventually return to school (hopefully soon!) they will be able to collect their test kits at that point.

If you would like further information or clarification on any of the points contained in this letter, please do not hesitate to contact us on 0300 300 1331.

Finally, thank you, as ever, for your support and patience. It is hugely appreciated by all of the staff here at Johnstone High School. Working in partnership with your family is so important to us, particularly at this challenging time.

Yours sincerely,

Lynne Hollywood

Head Teacher